

# **Armageddon**

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**FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY**

FADE IN

Blackness. Then a hint of green becomes EARTH. It lies across an expanse of space. Richly colored. Fertile.

A GIGANTIC ASTEROID cuts into frame, Burning into EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE and striking down in the currant area of Guzumel, Mexico.

VOICE

An impact equivalent to ten thousand nuclear weapons detonating simultaneously.

A HUGE DINOSAUR FOOT steps down hard and is VAPORIZED with a deafening ROAR.

VOICE

One hundred trillion tons of dirt and rock hurled into the atmosphere.

EARTH, seen from space, is rocked with an IMMENSE SHOCKWAVE. A SHEET OF DEBRIS washes across the North and South Hemispheres.

VOICE

A blanket of dust the sun is powerless to penetrate. For five thousand years our world is robbed of light as a nuclear winter falls. In that darkness, a civilisation is removed from existence.

EARTH is now completely entombed in a dark, cold hell. Letters push towards us--

"A R M A G E D D O N"

MILLION YEARS LATER

EARTH, reflected off the face of ASTRONAUT PETE SHELBY'S HELMET. It appears close enough to touch. Shelby, attached to SHUTTLE ATLANTIS BY LIFELINE, struggles to replace a piece of the shuttle's operational arm.

SHELBY

(with radio squawking)  
Houston, I can't get this thing to work...

EXT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

In a hub of computers and tracking equipment, we find DAN GOLDEN, former Astronaut from Apollo 8 (first crew to orbit the Moon) and now N.A.S.A's second-in-command. Golden is watching Shelby on a SERIES OF VIDEO SCREENS.

FLIGHT DIRECTOR WALTER CLARK sits with rows of N.A.S.A Techs. Golden stands over him, arms on the back o his chair.

CLARK  
Atlantis, what's the problem?

SHELBY (V.O.)  
It just isn't working. Any suggestions?

CLARKE  
Hang on Pete. We'll figure something out for you.

Golden taps Clark and sits down.

GOLDEN  
(to Shelby)  
We got the top scientific minds in the world working on this.  
(a slight smile)  
Try "whacking" the thing.

SHELBY  
Okay, Houston, commence whacking.

Selby begins Whacking the satellite with his glove. The SATELLITE comes n-line, lights up like a Christmas tree.

A HORRIFYING RUMBLING SOUND. SHOTGUN LIKE PELLETS assault the satellite. SHRAPNEL rips into it's delicate gold skin. The satellite EXPLODES.

Shelby's lifeline breaks; he spins off, suit leaking from twenty punctures.

INT. SHUTTLE ATLANTIS

COMMANDER JAMES TURNER turns to his left.

GENERAL  
"WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?"

EXT. SHUTTLE ATLANTIS

SHOTGUN LIKE PELLETS shred through Atlantis' N.A.S.A. logo, peeling the shuttle down to her ribs. FIERY EXPLOSION.

EXT. SPACE

CLOSE ON SHELBY as he twirls away from Atlantis. His helmet is fogging. He gasps for air, wrenching, his eyelids leaking blood. He tries to form words:

SHELBY  
Ple...he...me....

Shelby's SHOULDER-CAM angle spins end-over-end...

INT. N.A.S.A - MISSION CONTROL

MONITORS go dead.

N.A.S.A. TECHNICIAN #1  
All systems crashing!

N.A.S.A. TECHNICIAN #2  
Massive failure. We lost them.

Utter silence. Utter desolation. DOLLY IN ON GOLDEN'S FACE.  
Utter disbelief.

INT. WKU MOUNTIAN OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

THEO and PEARL (at telescope), and JIMBO (at the console),  
20's, are star-gazing. Astronomy books, Starbucks cups,  
etc., spread all over. Nine Inch Nails plays on the radio.  
These three could land a date if only they would lose the  
road flares (plaid shirts, glasses) that signal the painful  
fact that they are die-hard science nerds

THEO'S POV - THROUGH WKU

TELESCOPE - Far off in space is a dusty, murky swarm of matter -  
something resembling a FLOATING EXPLOSION.

JIMBO  
When are we going to let N.A.S.A in  
on what we've found?

THEO  
We don't even know what we have yet.  
Comet, asteroid - it could be anything  
up there. And don't be so eager to  
red flag N.A.S.A. They don't call us  
when they discover anything.

JIMBO  
Yeah, but this is their sandbox were  
playing in.

THEO  
This is our discovery. We're going  
to hold a press conference. We're  
going to be famous. SPACEWATCH'll  
name this thing after us. Job offers  
are going to fly in from all the big  
companies. J.P.L., that think tank  
up at M.I.T., hell even N.A.S.A. 'll  
be chasing us.

PEARL  
I'm going on Oprah, Larry King,  
Letterman...

JIMBO  
Hell with them, I'm going on Howard  
Stern....

PEARL  
(concentrating)  
This things really acting up tonight.  
We should find out if anyone else  
knows about this.

THEO  
How?

JIMBO  
(matter of factly)  
Call N.A.S.A

THEO  
And say what? "Hi, we're a couple  
astronomer geeks who found something  
really bitchin; floatin' in space."  
You can't just call N.A.S.A. It's  
like calling the White House. Besides,  
you'll never get the number.

JIMBO  
I have the number. I got it from  
"Mega monster."

PEARL  
Who?

JIMBO  
He's some super-hacker, I went to  
high school with. Guy's totally wired  
into every encrypted government  
installation.

THEO  
He's also an ex-con.

JIMBO  
They never proved he shut down the  
power in those seven states.

Theo grabs the phone.

INT. HOUSTON TEXAS - JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - NIGHT

Golden and his crew, devastated and exhausted, search for  
answers. We cut around the room.

CLARK  
What the hell was that?

TECHNICIAN 1  
Space junk?

TECHNICIAN 2

Too big, too much. It took out the whole shuttle.

CLARK

The press is going to want answers. What are we going to say?

GOLDEN

Nothing. Not until we know what happened.

INTERCUT - N.A.S.A. MISSION CONTROL/WKU OBSERVATORY

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Two N.A.S.A. techs, FLIP and SKIP, looking very haggard, furiously typing numbers into the circulator. The phone RINGS, Flip answers.

JIMBO

(whispers to Pearl & Theo)

I got mission control....!

FLIP

Yeah, Mission Control.

JIMBO

(into phone)

Uhh hi, I'm an astronomer in Kentucky, and I was wondering if you guys had seen some strange activity in the southern middle quadrant of the asteroid belt between Antares Major and Epsilom Scorpio....

FLIP

Who is this?

JIMBO

My name? Uhh....Louis Lipshitz...

FLIP

This is a restricted line. How did you get it? Where are you?

JIMBO

Lexington... Massachusetts.

FLIP

Can you tell me the exact coordinates..?

THEO

Hang up! Hang up now!

Jimbo hangs up the phone.

THEO  
Lexington.. uhh...Massachusetts.  
Idiot. I told you not to call them.

EXT. MANHATTAN ISLAND - SUNRISE

Establishing. The sun rises over the Brooklyn Bridge.

EXT. MANHATTAN - MADISON AVENUE - EARLY MORNING

LITTLE GUY, still yawning, exits an apartment with a Jack Russell terrier on a long RETRACTABLE LEASH. TERRIER'S POV as the little dog attacks the city, looking for a place to relieve himself. The Man stops in front of a "Crazy Eddie's" T.V. store. Floor-to-ceiling T.V.'s in the window broadcasting E.S.P.N.'s "Morning Exercise Show" with hot women SWEATING.

The Jack Russell strains on the leash to a FIRE HYDRANT. A SHOE is next to the hydrant, connected to a HUGE SAMOAN GUY watching the pelvic thrusting on T.V. The dog lifts his leg and pees, hitting both hydrant and shoe. The huge Samoan guy kicks the dog. The dog YELPS.

LITTLE GUY  
You kick my dog again and I'll go  
nuclear on you.

The T.V. images BLINK and STATIC. A massive SONIC BOOM emanates directly above. The huge Samoan guy looks up as---

A ROCK, the size of a basketball, strikes him and EXPLODES into the pavement, spewing sparks and concrete, throwing PEDESTRIANS to the sidewalk.

INT. "CRAZY EDDIE'S" T.V. STORE

FIFTY T.V.s are BLOWN across the showroom floor. SALESMEN and CUSTOMERS dive to the floor, SCREAMING.

EXT. MANHATTAN - "CRAZY EDDIES"

Little guy, lying on the sidewalk, recovers. His DOG LEASH runs from the leash grip into a 10 FOOT CRATER in the sidewalk. The huge Samoan guy's LEGS protrude.

LITTLE GUY  
Samson?

PEDESTRIAN  
Somebody call 9-1-1!

INSIDE THE CRATER - THE JACK RUSSELL dangles by the leash. Embedded in the hole 30 feet below is A SMOKING, RED HOT OBJECT.

INT. N.O.R.A.D. - CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN

The U.S.'s Early Warning Air Defence. Two U.S.A.F RADAR TECHNICIANS are hunched over radar screens.

RADAR TECH 1

I got one, two, three boggies...the whole board's lighting up!

The RADAR TECH 2 hits a KLAXON, stabs phone line buttons.

EXT. MANHATTAN - MORNING

Traffic is ground to a halt. CAMERA MOVES into a cab. STU, the Cabbie, with an ASIAN TOURIST, who's craning his neck out the window.

ASIAN TOURIST

What's the problem?

STU

Could be a couple of things: shootin', stabbin', dead guy

(shrugs)

Well, it's Friday, payday. Could be a jumper.

A projectile the size of a dump truck SCREAMS through the sky and blasts through three huge buildings.

More projectiles explode in the intersection. Cars get thrown everywhere. Stu's cab slams upside down into JOHNNY'S BAR.

ONE BLOCK DOWN. THE ENTIRE TOP FIVE STORIES -- A sheared section topples and hits the street below. Bricks, mortar and gargoyles everywhere.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - PENTAGON - DAY

Establishing, over which we hear RINGING PHONES.

EXT. PENTAGON - GENERAL TEMPLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Chaos in the corridors. GENERAL TEMPLE, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a man of stature, bursts out of his office, met by his SECRETARY.

SECRETARY

We're getting reports as far away as Greenland and parts of Mexico!

TEMPLE

Get me Dan Goldman on the secure phone.

Temple enters his office and picks up a secure phone.



INT. MISSION CONTROL - INSIDE THE GLASS-ENCASED ROOM

Golden enters the room and sits down. Technician Flip hands him a secure phone. Golden sinks into his chair. In the b.g., VIDEO MONITORS show twenty live feeds from T.V. stations across the country.

TEMPLE (V.O.)  
Can you go secure?

GOLDEN  
(Presses a button on  
the phone)  
I am secure. Go ahead, General.

He listens...WE HEAR the distinct gargled voice of a secure line.

GOLDEN  
When?

TEMPLE (V.O.)  
shuttle.

INTERCUT - GOLDEN / TEMPLE

INT. PENTAGON - GENERAL TEMPLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Temple paces in his office.

TEMPLE  
I'm going to brief the President.  
What's going on here, Dan? Why didn't  
we have warning?

GOLDEN  
Tell the president it's called "budget  
cuts." We don't have enough telescopes  
to track the skies.

TEMPLE  
Is it over?

GOLDEN  
I don't know. We'll figure it out.  
(hangs up)

INT. MISSION CONTROL - INSIDE THE GLASS-ENCASED ROOM

Flip enters the room. Skip writes notes....

GOLDEN  
(to Skip and Flip)  
Fly a team up to New York. Contact  
every Space Watch facility in the  
(MORE)

GOLDEN (CONT'D)  
world. We gotta find what part of  
the sky this is coming from.

SKIP  
I'll call J.P.L. and get the Hubble  
telescope on it.

GOLDEN  
Did we find who made the phone call  
last night?

FLIP  
The F.B.I.'s on it.

INT. KENTUCKY - DORMITORY ROOM

Theo is sleeping. The door is RAMMED in. Two F.B.I. AGENTS  
ROAR into the room, overwhelming him.

EXT. KENTUCKY - COLLEGE CAMPUS

Pearl and Jimbo are walking across campus. TWO BLACK SEDANS  
pull up. The kids increase their pace. The sedans SKID to a  
stop. F.B.I. AGENTS spring from the cars, cuff them and CUT  
TO :

MANHATTAN - JOHNNY'S - DAY

Stu's upside down cab, in front of Johnny's. A tow truck  
removes dented cars from the trashed intersection. Career  
drunks, FRANK, FRED and WILLIE, stand in the threshold looking  
out at the devastated intersection. Stu sits on top of his  
cab, Listening to the guys:

FRANK  
This city sucks...

FRED  
What the hell was it?

WILLIE  
They're sayin' it's space rocks.

STU  
Rocks from space, my ass. That, my  
friends, was the work of the big  
Saddam. That was big-ass Iraqi  
missiles

INT. MANHATTAN - SUBWAY - DAY

F.B.I. AGENTS and N.A.S.A. SCIENTISTS examine a CHUNK OF  
ASTEROID, still smouldering, which has ripped through the  
roof and floor of a subway car.

The plastic seats and aluminium panelling of the car has melted.

EXT. KENTUCKY - INTERROGATION ROOM - AFTERNOON

Jimbo, Theo and Pearl sit in front of three F.B.I. AGENTS. Two N.A.S.A.

ASTRONOMERS look over the kids' TELESCOPE PHOTOS with concern.

JIMBO

So, that N.A.S.A. guy wasn't kiddin'; about bein' arrested and....

FEDERAL AGENT

Please shut up.

JIMBO

Yes, absolutely, yes sir.

N.A.S.A. ASTRONOMER

I'm a N.A.S.A. astronomer. When were these photos taken?

FEDERAL AGENT

And which of you called N.A.S.A. Mission Control last night?

JIMBO

(Points at Theo)

Him.

THEO

(points at Jimbo)

Him.

JIMBO

I was calling the Houston area code, which is 713. I was calling 712, which is outside Spokane, Washington, where my Aunt Zelda....

N.A.S.A. ASTRONOMER

Tell us the exact ascension angle of your telescope when this was taken.

THEO

It's our discovery. No way.

N.A.S.A. ASTRONOMER

Your "discovery" killed close to 100 people in New York alone - people who could've used a warning.

Jimbo, Theo and Pearl lower their eyes.

JIMBO

Our math must've been off! we thought  
it was gonna pass the Earth!

PEARL

Ascension 712, retention 345.

F.B.I. AGENT 2

And you've told no one about this-  
not your teachers, not your friends?

N.A.S.A. ASTRONOMER

(into cellular phone)

J.P.L., please. Search co-ordinates...

INT. PASADENA CALIFORNIA - J.P.L. - NIGHT

N.A.S.A.'s Jet Propulsion Laboratory: home of the HUBBLE  
SPACE TELESCOPE.

Two J.P.L. TECHNICIANS man the Hubble's control console.

J.P.L. TECHNICIAN 1

New info! Plot co-ordinates 712 by  
345. Let's move on high-resolution  
imaging.

J.P.L. TECHNICIAN 2 punches the co-ordinates into a control  
console.

EXT. OUTER SPACE - CONTINUOUS (DAY)

The HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE floats by in geosynchronous orbit.  
The telescope tilts, repositioning in view.

INT. PASADENA CALIFORNIA - J.P.L. - NIGHT

Images from the Hubble arrive on a high resolution printer.  
J.P.L.

Technician 1 grabs four PHOTOS from the printer. Technician  
2 swipes stuff off the console, making room. Together they  
arrange the four photos. They star silently at the awesome  
COMPOSITE PHOTO.

J.P.L. TECHNICIAN 1

Motherfu.....

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - ENCLOSED ROOM - NIGHT

Golden and all his TECHNICIANS crowd around a console, staring  
at a smaller version of the COMPOSITE PHOTO.

GOLDEN

Copies to the Pentagon, Colorado  
Space Command, and the Washington  
(MORE)

---

GOLDEN (CONT'D)  
office. We gotta compute size,  
composition, speed, impact point WE  
SEE the photo -- A HUGE ASTEROID

EXT. OUTER SPACE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

CAMERA PUSHES THROUGH A CLOUD OF ROCKY, ICY DEBEIS,  
penetrating the cloud until the HUGE ASTEROID CORE comes  
into clear view -- a mass of dirt and ice -- rough, craggy,  
menacing.

INT. N.A.S.A. - BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

Golden and Clark enter. A group of ten N.A.S.A. SENIOR  
TECHNICIANS are all talking at once.

GOLDEN

Okay guys, one of the worst days in  
N.A..S.A history just got worse. Ten  
million to one. A rogue comet came  
from deep space and collided with an  
asteroid. Some kids actually got a  
picture of the collision event and  
told no one. The stuff that hit this  
morning was the collision's forward-  
thrown matter, mere pebbles from  
what's about to come. Walter?

CLARK

A big asteroid. E.T.A., eighteen  
days. A lot bigger than the five  
mile one that obliterated the  
dinosaurs.

GOLDEN

The size of Texas.

Silence. Everybody stares at each other.

The phone CHIRPS.

GOLDEN'S SECRETARY

Director, the Pentagon.

Golden hits a button.

A LARGE T.V. SCREEN establishes AUDIO/VISUAL link.

INTERCUT; PENTAGON - SITUATION ROOM/ N.A.S.A. - BRIEFING  
ROOM

INT. PENTAGON - SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

Temple sits with the Joint Chiefs, White House Chief of Staff,  
the Directors of the N.A.S.A., C.I.A., etc.

TEMPLE

Dan, we're all here. Tell us what we're up against.

GOLDEN (V.O.)

In it's simplest terms? The end of Mankind. One asteroid, one mile wide or bigger, impacts the Earth with the equivalent force of all the nuclear weapons in the world, times a thousand. Half our population will die within 24 hours from tidal waves and heat pulses. The other half won't be so lucky. In the end, it will be men eating the flesh of other men.

(beat)

It's not the end of the world, General, the world -Earth - will still be here. But there will be no life - maybe cockroaches and some resilient strands of bacteria.

TEMPLE

Well, that's really positive, Dan. The President just got off the phone with the Russians. They're just about to launch a new Mars Probe on the biggest rocket in the world.

Golden and the N.A.S.A. BRASS exchange sceptical looks.

GOLDEN (V.O.)

With the worst guidance system in the world. Their Mars Probe in '96 was found by a pygmy tribe in Africa.

TEMPLE

They're going to pull off the probe and replace it with four Atlas Class IV nuclear warheads. Enough punch in their opinion - not to break it up - but to slow it down enough to miss Earth's orbit.

GOLDEN (V.O.)

Their launch date is set for next month.

TEMPLE

They're going to move it up.

GOLDEN (V.O.)

To when?

TEMPLE

Sixteen hours from now.

---  
All the N.A.S.A. Technicians CLAMOR at once.

GOLDEN (V.O.)

What are they gonna do, glue, spit, and scotch tape it together? Even if they get a nuke out to the asteroid, a surface nuclear detonation is not going to work. The only way is to split the thing in half and hope the two pieces slide past us.

TEMPLE

Thank you for bringing up the impossible, Dan.

COLINSWOOD

People, the President's joining us, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT (V.O.)

Well, this has been a tough day. The media's all over this. They're going to get nothing. Telling the public we might all be dead in eighteen days achieves nothing but panic.

GOLDEN (V.O.)

Mr President, finding this speck in the sky is a very hard thing to do unless you have the exact co-ordinates. There are only twelve telescopes powerful enough to see it right now. You've got a full moon goin' for four days - makes it all but impossible to see.. Once these things draw closer to Earth, you'll never keep a lid on this. No way.

INT. N.A.S.A. BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

The video screen blinks off. Golden looks at his Techs.

GOLDEN

How many of you are as scared as I am?

Golden raises his hand. All the other N.A.S.A. Techs, one by one, raise their hands.

GOLDEN

One giant leap for Mankind. Everyone remember that? This is what we are going to do. We're going to fly to that asteroid with a nuclear device, implant it and get off before it blows. Quincy?

All eyes turn to N.A.S.A. Chief of R&D, RONALD QUINCY. Quincy has coke bottle glasses and a 198 I.Q.

QUINCY

Look, set a fire cracker off in your open palm, you get a third degree burn. Close your fist, It'll do some serious damage. If we can get a nuke deep in one of the asteroid's fault lines, she'll split in two, like a diamond.

GOLDEN

You're all looking at us like we're crazy. We're not.

SKIP

Dan, our currant shuttle fleet is too old and too slow.

GOLDEN

What I'm going to tell you is a breach of national security and could land me in jail, but in eighteen days there arnt' gonna be any jails, so....We're not gonna use a current shuttle. Gentlemen, I'm talking about the X-71.

SKIP

It's done?

QUINCY

Has been for three months.

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT - FLIGHT TESTING FACILITY - DAY

N.A.S.A.'s flight testing facility. A flat, hard, dry area dominated by an ENORMOUS HANGER. The HANGER DOOR is open; breeze blows back a BLACK SILK TARPAULIN, revealing the X-71's NOSE. Technicians come and go.

INT. N.A.S.A - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

GOLDEN

Time is our enemy. This is like the race to the Moon, guys - what this Agency was founded on.

SKIP

Boss, we're good at space travel, but you're talkin' about drilling a hole.



GOLDEN

Quincy's been working on excavating the ice from the Moon - he's gonna reorient his thinking. Right, Quince?

QUINCY

Right. And the first thing I'm gonna do is talk to the guy I ripped off. His name is Harry S. Stamper. He's the best oil driller in the world.

GOLDEN

I don't care who he is, what he's doing.

EXT. NORWAY COAST - NORTH SEA - "TROLL" OIL RIG - DAY

SUPER: DAY TWO

Close on a GOLF BALL. THWACK! The golf ball EXPLODES off the tee from an oil rig. The "TROLL" is the largest man-made structure in the world - 12 aircraft carriers big and 1200 feet tall. A self-contained city.

HARRY STAMPER, world's foremost expert on offshore deep drilling, immaculately attired in golf attire and spikes, stands on a patch of Astroturf with a five iron in his hand. Piped-in MOZART drown out the rig noise.

EXT. "TROLL" - DRILLING PLATFORM - "A" DERRICK - DAY

The main drilling platform. On "A" derrick, Chief Driller, A.J. FROST, 30, handsome, is at the controls. Roughnecks "JUMBO" CARTWRIGHT, "BEAR" BROWN, "CHICK" CHAPPLE, TITO GUEVARA, and MAX LOGAN, handle 20 foot sections of PIPE DRILLING SRTRING with a HYDRAULIC TONG AND CLAMP.

Roughneck BENNIE MORGAN, late 20's an ox of a man, comes across the platform, pulling an oily green coveralls and donning his hard-hat. Bennie examines the rig's DOWNHOLE PRESSURE GAUGE.

BENNIE

Chick! take a look at this! Chick : Pressure's been up all morning. She kicked twice on me.

A.J.'s eyes move to a TALL BLOND MAN on his lunch break across the rig.

A.J.

What did our always-at-lunch-Swedish geologist say?

BENNIE

Jah, jah, jah. No bleeper. Too much pressure.

CHICK  
You askin' the old man?

A.J. nods and walks off.

EXT. "TROLL" RIG - TOP TIER

Harry HITS another ball. WE REVEAL his target, a GREENPEACE BOAT anchored off the rig. The BALL strikes the side of the boat, just missing the head of ONE of the PROTESTERS.

HARRY  
Almost caught that little bastard.

He admires his shot as his daughter, GRACE, walks up. Grace is late 20's, business dress, Harvard Law.

GRACE  
Having fun?

Harry HITS another ball. It misses the boat, skips across the water.

GRACE  
Sure sliced the shit outta that one.  
(frowns)

HARRY  
Watch your language, Gracie.

GRACE  
Seagulls swallow those and they die.

HARRY  
Stupid birds.

Harry's EYES move to a GROUP OF GREENPEACE PROTESTERS across the rig, being held back by Stamper Oil SECURITY GUARDS.

GRACE  
I just talked with A.J.

HARRY  
Talking to him quite a bit these days....

GRACE  
(awkward pause)  
"A" rig's acting up. The drill string kicked twice this morning, gave Chick a nasty bruise in the head.

HARRY  
Good. He's not vulnerable there.

GRACE

Chase Manhattan okayed the bridge financing for the Micronesia Project, but at 21 percent interest. And Lloyd's of London refuses to underwrite the Venezuela Project...

HARRY

Thieves and cowards, all of 'em. Twist their arms.

GRACE

I am.

HARRY

Keep twisting. Like a pit bull.

GRACE

Oh, and that magazine article - they want some human interest stuff - likes and dislikes. "Likes" I said Golf, Fly Fishing, Single Malt Scotch, Old Movies. What about "Dislikes?"

HARRY

Any kind of flying and oil company executives. Go deal with 'em. I always look better when you're doing the talking.

Harry HITS another ball. CLANG.

GRACE

You know you donate 300 grand a year to Greenpeace.

Harry smiles at the contradiction.

HARRY

What'd your mother call me?

GRACE

Complicated.

HARRY

Yeah well....I'm complicated.

Grace walks off, passing A.J., winking at him. A.J. winks back.

A.J.

What's his mood?

GRACE

Complicated.

A.J. walks up to Harry.

HARRY

I understand we're having problems with "A" rig.

A.J.

I'm on top of it  
(Harry picks up his bag)  
Harry, you have a second?

HARRY

Yeah. One.

A.J.

I'll hurry. I've worked for you for a long time.

HARRY

Twelve years.

A.J.

And you've been real good to me....

HARRY

Another company make you an offer, kid?

A.J.

No. The reason I am here, today, standing here, talking to you. I'm obviously talking to you...but it's, you know, not, uhh...it's not an oil-related matter exactly....

HARRY

You're sweating, A.J.

A.J.

You know there comes a time in a man's life when...  
(to himself)  
No, that's a cliché...  
(to Harry)  
Can I start again? I, uhh, fell...I've fallen...

HARRY

You hurt yourself?

A.J.

In love, I mean. Fallen in love. It's the damndest thing, but this person you...know...really well.

ACROSS THE PLATFORM - Grace escorts five angry OIL INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES over to Harry. A KLAXON SOUNDS. Harry, alarmed, rushes right past them, toward the "A" Derrick.

They follow, snapping at his heel:

OIL EXECUTIVE 1  
You explicitly promised results at  
25 thousand feet.

HARRY  
We have results.

OIL EXECUTIVE 2  
But we don't have oil. We've given  
you everything you've asked....

HARRY  
Horseshit. What the...? Chick! Bennie!  
Somebody better tell me why the hell  
"A" derrick is not turning!

Chick hurries up to Harry.

CHICK  
The uhh....the Greenpeace guys.

Harry approaches "A" Derrick. Five MEMBERS of Greenpeace  
have handcuffed themselves in a circle around the drilling  
pipe.

HARRY  
Hey there, what can I do for you?

GREENPEACE LEADER  
This is an official protest.

HARRY  
'Course it is. I love you guys. You  
like dolphins and whales, I like 'em  
too. Hey, I know you. You too. Didn't  
you have shorter hair?

GREENPEACE LEADER  
Stamper, do you know what this thing  
does to the eco-system?

HARRY  
How'd you get out here? Canoe?  
Rowboat? Oh, that boat down there  
with a thousand horsepower diesel!

GREENPEACE LEADER  
How can you wake up every day and  
look at yourself in the mirror?

HARRY  
The same way you did when you blow-  
dried your hair this morning.

(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

And you used a curling iron, I betcha. Did you know most electricity's from burning oil? I'll stop drillin' when the world - stops usin' it. Bennie, start 'er up!

GREENPEACE LEADER

Wait.....

HARRY

Can't wait! I'm a businessman! Those goons over there gave me 57 mil. to find oil and they ain't leavin' till I do! 'cause they have no lives!

The drill string begins to turn in the hole.

GREENPEACE LEADER

We....we threw away the key.

HARRY

Sorry. Time is money. BENNIE!

The MASSIVE HYDRAULIC KELLY begins to descend on the Greenpeace Activists' heads.

GREENPEACE LEADER

STOP!!!!

HARRY

Bennie! Third gear!

The Greenpeace Leader miraculously produces a key and frantically begins unlocking the handcuffs.

Grace turns to the oil executives.

GRACE

He's good at public relations.

A.J. approaches Grace; they watch Harry.

GRACE

So?

(A.J. stares at her)

What?

(no response)

What?

(no response)

A.J.?

Suddenly, across "A" Derrick, a KLAXON SOUNDS.

CHICK

She's kickin'!

The civilians get the hell away.

Harry and A.J. run toward the rig.

CHICK  
Pressure's north of seven thousand!

A.J.  
We gotta clear the Derrick!

HARRY  
(looks at wellhead)  
Chick, rig up another pipe.  
(Chick and Bennie  
look at Harry with  
uncertainty)  
NOW, NOT TOMORROW.

Chick and Bennie begin clamping, and tong a PIPE STRAND onto the DRILL STRING like an INDY PIT STOP CREW.

A.J.  
Harry, we've hit pressure. We gotta bleed it off. e go any deeper, we'll blow the rig.

HARRY  
Thanks for that opinion. Chick, full speed!

A.J.  
The bit's five thousand feet down! Full speed'll rip the pipe apart!

HARRY  
You learn all this in college? I been doing this thirty years, kid.

Get on the controls.

A.J. moves reluctantly to the DRILLING CONTROLS. Chick nods to A.J., who engages the gears. The PIPE STRING turns at FULL SPEED. The new drill pipe descends ten feet into the hole, then....

The torque rips the NEWLY ATTACHED PIPE from the drilling string. The drill spins freely.

A.J. hits the "stop! lever and stares at Harry.

The roughnecks converge around the wellhead.

A.J.  
I'm goin' down. Reattach it. Gimme a wrench and a band coupling.

Chick hand the items to A.J.

A.J. descends into the drilling hole.

INT. DOWN THE DRILLING HOLE - DAY

A.J., holding his breath under water, shimmies down the drilling pipe feet-first, inside the water-filled concrete tube running from the rig to the ocean floor.

A.J. begins wrestling the disconnected sections together.

EXT. RIG - "A"

DERRICK

The wellhead KICKS. The rig platform shakes and shudders. SEAWATER erupts from the wellhead.

CHICK

The drill hole's flooding!

GRACE

A.J.!!

Harry strips off his jacket and climbs into the wellhead. He takes a huge breath and disappears into the brine-filled drilling hole.

INT. DRILLING HOLE

A.J. is pinned against the hole wall by one of the disconnected pipes.

Harry comes down the hole. He plants his back against the hole wall and kicks the pipe, freeing A.J. A slow, deep, RUMBLE emanates from below. The Briny water inside the hole suddenly turns BLACK and VISCOUS.

A.J. and Harry exchange an alarmed look. Harry, then A.J., pull for the surface, up the drilling hole as --

EXT. DRILLING PLATFORM - "A" DERRICK - DAY

-- the wellhead KICKS again. The rig platform SHUDDERS violently. The derrick sways. SEAWATER SPEWS up from the wellhead.

CHICK

Get back, she's gonna blow!

Grace, Chick, Bennie and the other Roughnecks huddle around the flooded drilling hole, waiting. Tense, agonising seconds pass.

Harry scrambles out, covered in...CRUDE OIL.

He grabs Grace and pulls her away.



GRACE

Where's A.J.!!!? Harry : RIGHT BEHIND  
ME! RUN!

The platform SHAKES. Harry, Grace, and the others sprint  
away as --

A GEYSER OF CRUDE OIL erupts from the drilling hole, blowing  
A.J. out of the hole fifteen feet above the wellhead. A.J.  
crashes to the platform floor.

CRUDE OIL rains down on Grace and the Roughnecks...they run  
to A.J.

GRACE

Never do that again!

CLOSE ON A.J. - he's looking back at the DRILL HOLE, panting,  
traumatised, greasy oil raining on his head.

A.J.

You know how I told you there were  
two obstacles? I didn't do the  
first, 'cause he's tough...but I did  
the second...!

(pulls out case; opens  
it)

I got it at uhm..Tiffany's. I can't  
give it to you until I talk to him,  
but try it on.

She reaches for the ring. It slips from A.J.'s hand and falls  
through the grated floor, pinging off the rig's steel pylons,  
100 feet into the sea below.

GRACE

Don't worry! Tiffany's insures up to  
a week from purchase!

A.J. stares despondently over the railing.

Harry, black with crude oil, staggers past A.J.

A.J.

(Pointedly)  
Good plan, Harry.

HARRY

(Walks over to Oil  
Execs)  
There's your oil, gentlemen. Now get  
the hell off my rig.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Golden, Clark, Skip, Flip and the rest of the Mission Control Technicians watch a live feed from Russia. A RUSSIAN ENERGIA SUPER BOOSTER ROCKET sits on its launch platform.

FLIP

Look it that sucker. They got a nuke up there in sixteen hours?

SKIP

It'll never fly. Never.

CLARK

Three things the Russians make well, guys - vodka, gymnasts and rockets. Don't count 'em out.

GOLDEN

It's the late 20th century, I run the U.S. Space Program, and I'm praying to God the Russians are better at this than we are....

EXT. RUSSIA SPACE CENTER - SMOLINSKAYA A.F. BASE - DAY

The ground begins to SHAKE uncontrollably. EXHAUST billows out from the Rocket's BOOSTERS. The Russian rocket blasts off and lifts into....

Something's wrong. The Rocket stops accelerating and stands still for a moment. It falls to Earth; BLOWING UP in a thunderous inferno.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Golden, Clark, and all the N.A.S.A. Techs stare at the burning rocket.

GOLDEN

So, where's our oil driller?

EXT. RIG - "A" DERRICK

A champagne cork POPS and WIDEN TO Harry, Grace, A.J., and all fifty Roughnecks. The wellhead's been capped; pumping 2500 gallons per minute.

HARRY

To Hole Number Seventy-Six!

ROUGHNECKS

(UNISON)

Hole Number Seventy-Six!

The Oil Executives stand off, watching.

OIL EXECUTIVE 1  
Seventy-Six?

OIL EXECUTIVE 2  
This is Harry's Seventy-Sixth straight  
hit.

OIL EXECUTIVE 1  
The man's a legend.

We hear the WHOP, WHOP, WHOP of HELICOPTER BLADES. Harry,  
Grace and A.J. turn toward the noise.

TWO U.S. ARMY BLACKHAWK HELICOPTERS whirr across the choppy  
ocean.

EXT. OIL RIG - TOP TIER HELI-PAD - MINUTES LATER

The helicopters land on the heli-pad on the oil rig's top  
tier, MAJOR STINSON, 50's, wearing formal dress and sunglasses  
along with two strapping ADJUTANTS stride across the rig.

MAJOR STINSON  
Harry Stamper? I'm Major William  
Stinson, United States Army. I need  
a few words with you. In private.

HARRY  
Say it now, say it quick, or get off  
my rig, Major. I've got a business  
to run here.

MAJOR STINSON  
You've been summoned back to the  
States.

HARRY  
Who's doin' the summoning?

MAJOR STINSON  
Your Government, Mr Stamper.

INT. SOMEPLACE IN KENTUCKY - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Jimbo, Theo and Pearl sit in a holding cell some place.  
Jimbo's banging on the door.

JIMBO  
Hey, zipperheads! Ever watch "L.A.  
Law?" Right to remain silent, right  
to an attorney? My brother's a badass  
lawyer - he's gonna sue your asses  
to Mars. I was in pre-law for a month -  
you can't put somebody in jail for  
makin' a phone call!!!

PEARL

It isn't about that, Jimbo. We saw something we weren't supposed to.

THEO

Something they're not telling the public.

JIMBO

Yeah, that's why they were so hot for the co-ordinates. Do you think it's an asteroid? Or comet?

THEO

I dunno - but I bet it's a whopper.

INT. N.A.S.A. FLIGHT MISSION ROOM - DAY

Harry, AJ. and Grace are led into the room by Stinson. Quincy's eyes move to Harry --

QUINCY

He's here.

Quincy, Clark and Golden stand, approach --

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Dan Golden, meet Mister Harry Stamper, the finest oil riller in the world.

GOLDEN

Mister Stamper..

(shaking hands)

Dan Golden, I'm Director of --

HARRY

I know who you are. I watched T.V. once. Apollo 8, right? First manned lunar orbit.

GOLDEN

That was a long time ago. I run this place now. And we've got a serious problem on our hands that Quincy here thinks you might be able to help us out with --

Quincy eagerly outstretches his hand. They shake. Quincy doesn't let go.

QUINCY

I'm a big fan, Mr. Stamper.

HARRY

I kinda caught that.

(to Golden)

What's the problem, gentlemen?

GOLDEN

I wonder if we might speak alone?

HARRY

These two are my right and left arms.  
Grace Stamper and Albert Jack Frost.  
Stupid name, so we call him A.J..

(handshakes)

They run my company. You talk to  
me, you talk to them.

GOLDEN

Okay.

Golden direct everyone into --

INT. N.A.S.A. - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Golden, Temple, Clark, Harry, Grace, and A.J. sit in a dark  
room viewing a VIDEOTAPE. Quincy stands beside the projector,  
supplying narration. On the tape we see Harry on a rig  
platform shaking hands with an ARAB BUSINESSMAN --

HARRY

Great, home movies.

Grace and A.J. smile.

QUINCY

Nineteen eighty five. The first well  
drilled over 50 thousand feet. They  
said it couldn't be done. You did  
it. Incredible.

ON THE SCREEN - Harry's on another rig, shaking hands with  
an INDONESIAN BUSINESSMAN. Harry leans over and kisses the  
bit. The Businessmen shake their heads, awed.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Nineteen Ninety-One. Directional  
drilling through two miles of  
anthracite. They also said that  
couldn't be done. You did it.  
Incredible.

Harry looks at Quincy strangely; this sure is a bizarre form  
of celebrity.

QUICY

Nineteen Ninety-Three. Over seven  
thousand. Once again they said --

GOLDEN

Move it along, Quincy.

QUINCY

Right, sorry. Mister Stamper, you're the world's foremost expert in deep drilling. You hold specialized patents in high speed bits, drilling fluids, downhole motors. Can I call you Harry?

HARRY

Stick with Stamper.

GOLDEN

Well, Mister Stamper, we need you to drill a hole. It's in a difficult place.

HARRY

I've drilled in them all.

GOLDEN

Not...this place. This is really out there.

(beat)

Space, Mister Stamper.

HARRY

As in...outer?

SATELLITE PHOTOS OF THE ASTEROID come up on the screen --

TEMPLE

You've watched the news the last 24 hours? You heard about the meteor shower?

(Harry nods)

What you don't know is that an asteroid is on a collision course with Earth. If it hits us, Earth as we know it will be over.

GOLDEN

We're manning a mission to that asteroid to plant a nuclear device in it's core. To do that we need to drill an eight hundred foot hole.

Harry looks at A.J. and Grace.

HARRY

A.J., is this guy shitting me?

A.J.

I don't think they shit people at N.A.S.A., Harry --

HARRY

An eight hundred foot hole. On a moving asteroid. In space.

GOLDEN

All we want is your advice in perfecting our drilling arm, any help you can provide. We'll pay your usual consultancy, of course.

HARRY

Show me your rig.

INT. N.A.S.A. - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

Quincy leads Golden, Harry, A.J., Grace, and Clark through N.A.S.A.'s Research and Development area. This place looks like "Q's" weapons shop from the James Bond movies as funded by every company on the fortune 500 --

Huge, clinically clean, dominated by MASSIVE ROCKET ENGINES. TECHNICIANS in white coats and hairnets work on a variety of equipment.

TECHNICIANS hunch over a ROVER VEHICLE, not the golf cart used on the moon. This is low, squat, sturdy, with an enclosed airlocked passenger compartment.

QUINCY

The "Armadillo" - our fourth generation rover. It carries a six-cell solar engine with 824 horses. This was a joint venture with the Germans.

(winks)

It's designed by Porsche.

Quincy motions to TWO TECHNICIANS. They roll over a ROBOTIC ARM on a gurney, powered by an ELECTRIC MOTOR. The robotic arm is connected to an OIL DRILLING BIT.

HARRY

Where's the Kelly?

QUINCY

This baby works without one.

HARRY

How does it work?

Harry starts to inspect the bit.

QUINCY

It works through a series of complexly designed differential gears.

Harry's face tightens, as he studies the bit further --

HARRY  
This is my Patent.

QUINCY  
"Drilling Power Transfer Without  
Conventional Hydraulics," by Harry  
S. Stamper. You registered it with  
the U.S. Patent Office last year.

HARRY  
You stole it.

QUINCY  
We just borrowed it, Mister Stamper.

Quincy unpockets a remote control panel and presses a button.  
The drill bit presses down into a block of concrete and begins  
to rapidly CHEW through it, as Harry marvels at the  
realisation of his design.

QUINCY (CONT'D)  
We built this arm to mine ice from  
the moon -- greatest discovery in  
space in thirty years.

HARRY  
What'd this cost?

GOLDEN  
Ten million.

QUINCY  
Twenty-our million.

HARRY  
Boy, I'm in the wrong line of work.  
So, that's where my taxes go. For  
thievin' incompetent, government  
employed rip-off artists?

A.J.  
No torque adjustment, no pressure  
release valve....a big hunk of junk.

QUINCY  
We're working on that.

HARRY  
What happens if you hit gas? You  
have three seconds. Drill faster,  
run like hell, or pray.  
(beat)  
Time's up. You're dead., The rig  
just blew.



---

GOLDEN  
Gentlemen, gentlemen, wait a second.  
The crux of the matter....

HARRY  
Hang on. I betcha everyone in this  
room has a PH.D.

GOLDEN  
Or three....

HARRY  
I left school after tenth grade. I  
earned my PH.D every day offshore  
drilling holes. You can't get it in  
a book. Drilling holes is about  
instinct - about smellin' it.  
Drillin' holes is an art. You want  
the crux of the matter?

(beat)  
You stole my patent, and you don't  
have a goddamn idea how to use it.  
As for this piece o' crap, don't  
insult me.

(Walks around the rig)  
I'll rebuild it - the right way -  
and drill the hole for you.

GRACE  
Uhm, pop, could we discuss this...?

HARRY  
Just give me a space suit.

GOLDEN  
You won't need one. You're not going  
up.

HARRY  
You don't have a choice. I think all  
you PH.D's know that.

Harry walks off. Grace and A.J. follow.

GOLDEN  
(Calling after Harry)  
Harry. Let's figure this out.

INT. N.A.S.A. - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Harry sits opposite Golden and Temple. Grace and A.J. stand  
behind him.

HARRY  
First of all, you're going to buy my  
patent.

...

TEMPLE

Of course, completely in order. What is the price?

HARRY

Fifty million dollars.

Uncomfortable pause. Temple clears his throat.

TEMPLE

Mr. Stamper, this mission is to preserve the future of....

HARRY

You're right, too low. I'm still pissed. Seventy million.

TEMPLE

Done.

Harry looks to Grace.

HARRY

Give that money to my Greenpeace buddies.  
(smile)  
Told you...complicated.

Harry goes to shake, pulls back --

HARRY (CONT'D)

And I never want to pay taxes again.

TEMPLE

I'll call the I.R.S., try to uhm, explain the situation.

They begin to shake. Harry withdraws his hand.

HARRY

I have this great log cabin in Montana. It's kind of a nature...getaway...thing.

TEMPLE

You want us to buy that, too?

HARRY

No. I fly fish there. But the fly fishin's sucked ever since they put in that goddamn hydro-electric dam. I want it gone by the time I get back.

Temple reluctantly nods. They stand to shake, Harry pulls away again.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Now about my crew.

GOLDEN

The deal was for you, not others.

HARRY

I'm only as good as the men I work with. The ones in those home movies of yours.

GOLDEN

It's out of the question.

Harry half-smiles to Grace.

GOLDEN (CONT'D)

Okay, who?

HARRY

My chief tool pusher. You game A.J.?

A.J.

Wouldn't miss it, Harry.

HARRY

And my roughnecks, Roustabouts, and Rockhound?

TEMPLE

Rock what? Is that a dog?

HARRY

No. Just a meek, geek geophysicist.

GOLDEN

What kind of men are these?

INT. SUPERSTRETCH LIMOUSINE - DAY

Bennie, Chick (30's, a street philosopher), Max (35, hulky), TITO, and ROCKHOUND (small, wiry) are riding in high style. Chick is hanging out of the sun roof with his shirt off. Radio's on full blast. Rockhound's pouring whiskey from the fancy decanters.

CHICK

We're living LARGE!

BENNIE

(Talking on a cellular phone)

Give me nickels on Miami, Washington, San Diego, and Green Bay.

(MORE)

BENNIE (CONT'D)

(listens)

Quit whining. Last thing I need is to be friends with my bookie.

(listens, then angry)

Sundance Kid trapped in that Hacienda, did they wait to die? Hell no. They went out guns blazing. I live by the code of that movie, man.

Bennie hangs up the phone, he looks across from him at -- Tito Guevara, late 30's, stocky, tattooed, Latino, (reformed 118th Street L.A. o.g. gangbanger who was rescued from the streets ten years back and put to work on a rig by Harry) is reading a book: "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus."

Chick drops down into his seat, continues his heated discussion with Max.

CHICK

Charlie Bronson could kick Steve McQueen's ass and have enough left over to duke it out with Burt Reynolds in his "Smokey and the Bandit" period.

MAX

I'm glad you qualified that shit 'cause you know the Burt Reynolds of "Deliverance" would have kicked Charlie's ass.

CHICK

Burt was trouble in that flick.

MAX

What would you say the all-time, slam-bam, take-no-prisoners, kick-ass Charlie Bronson movie is?

CHICK

All time? Well, let me think. "Dirty Dozen," the first "Death Wish." No, no! That movie where he hunted the buffalo. I don't remember the name but he hunted a buffalo and he said like three words during the whole picture. That's my selection.

MAX

Fine. The buffalo movie. That's your pick. You really think that buffalo Charlie could have thrown-down with the Steve McQueen form "Bullitt?"

CHICK

He'da whooped his ass and then his father's. We'll settle this right now. Rockhound? You heard the debate. You're the Supreme Court. What's the final verdict?

ROCKHOUND

Tough call. But for me though, one name -- Poncherello. Eric Estrada. You know, "Chips."

Chick and Max just look at him. A beat. Then --

MAX

What did you ask him for? Guy makes his living looking at rocks.

The limo pulls over and stops. The DRIVER gets out and walks to the rear door. Opens it.

EXT. N.A.S.A. - FRONT OF FACILITY - DAY

The Roughnecks get out in front of the JOHNSON SPACE CENTER. They stare up at the familiar N.A.S.A. LOGO imprinted on the building. Chick and Bennie exchange looks --

BEHIND THEM:

A battered Ford pick-up pulls up, driven by 71 year-old "MAMA" MABEL BROWN.

Mabel's six foot-five, 375 pound son, BEAR, gets out of the car.

BEAR

'Bye, Mama.

MABEL

Reginald, get over here and kiss your Mama goodbye.

BEAR

In front of the guys?

MABEL

Never too old to kiss your Mama.

JUMBO, six-foot five, 375 pounds, bald, pulls up on a HARLEY DAVIDSON motorcycle. He climbs off the bike.

CHICK

There ain't no oil in this place. What the hell are we doing here?

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - MEDICAL WING - DAY

Harry has just briefed his crew on the mission.

BEAR  
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?

CHICK  
Harry, this is some "Star Wars" shit.  
This ain't for us.

HARRY  
It's a job, like any other. Just a  
different location.

MAX  
We work rigs. We understand rigs. We  
don't know dick about being  
astronauts.

ROCKHOUND  
(pointing)  
I might add that to get us up there  
they're going to have to strap our  
asses on one of those rockets. That  
means fire, involuntary shit release,  
and a slew of other stuff I can't  
hang with.

JUMBO  
We don't have "The Right Stuff,"  
know what I'm saying?  
(looking around)  
We're Roughnecks.

HARRY  
I'd rather die up there fighting  
this thing than sit here waiting for  
it.

Harry's line hangs in the air. Everyone exchanges looks.

BEAR  
I don't like the idea of waiting  
around to croak. It's wimpy.

CHICK  
If Harry-the-iron-ass is going, I'm  
going with him.

BEAR  
Hell, I'm going just so I can say I  
went.  
(shrugs)  
Once we get up there, it's making  
hole.

TITO

I'm in.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Max, Chick, and Tito sit in HOSPITAL SMOCKS on two examination tables. They have tattoos, long hair. A cigarette dangles from Tito's lips. AIR FORCE NURSES are everywhere. A NURSE clips a SWATCH OF HAIR from each of the men.

She comes to Tito. He grabs her arm. Takes the scissors from her.

TITO

Nobody touches my hair but me.

He cuts a SWATCH of hair, gives it to her. A SECOND NURSE is in front of Max and Tito.

MAX

You're not taking any more blood.  
You vampires already have enough to  
feed your coven for a year.

NURSE

(nasally-voiced)

We need to know what substances you've  
recently ingested.

TITO

What, uhh, "substances" you talkin'  
about?

NURSE

(matter of fact)

Drugs.

Ma and Tito eye each other nervously. Head Nurse, HELGA, stands before Chick with an ENAMA PROBE and a JAR OF VASELINE.

CHICK

An Ena-WHAT?

HELGA

Enema.

CHICK

And you want to stick it where?

Helga sticks the ENEMA PROBE in a jar of VASELINE.

CHICK (CONT'D)

No way, lady. I came here to drill.

HELGA

So did I.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING CENTER -  
DAY

Chick sits before a hugely endowed but square female N.A.S.A.  
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Say the first two words that come to  
mind, beginning with each letter.

CHICK

Bodacious and....Bountiful.  
(she holds up "S")  
Succulent and Sinful.

She holds up the letter "F" and HOLD ON CHICK'S REACTION.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Harry sits before the Chief Physician, DR. BANKS. Golden  
looks out the window. Dr. Banks, dead-serious, flips through  
the medical and psychiatric test scores.

DR BANKS

Mr. Stamper, your men...are...take  
Mr. Chappel. I believe they call him  
Chic.

HARRY

Charles, but if you call him that,  
he'll kill you.

DR BANKS

(nervous laugh)  
I assume you're joking.  
(no response)  
Your men show aggression, extreme  
maladjustment to their surroundings,  
anti-social behaviour --

HARRY

With all due respect, Doctor, I don't  
know too army guys who are social  
when someone is trying to jam a tube  
up their butt.

DR BANKS

Does your company have a drug testing  
program? These toxicology reports  
are a throwback to the sixties. All  
show huge levels of nicotine and  
alcohol. Three of the, four show  
illegal drugs. A couple I had to  
look up. One of them had "Kematine" --  
a very potent sedative.



HARRY

A lot of people take sedatives.

DR BANKS

This one is used on horses.

HARRY

I don't tell my men how to live their lives. They're with me to do a job and they do it well.

GOLDEN

This is getting us nowhere. Can they fly, or not?

DR BANKS

(flipping through physical records)

Failed. Failed. Really failed. Under the circumstances...

(locks eyes with Golden)

They're the finest physical specimens I've ever seen.

INT. N.A.S.A. - LONGSHOT

Harry's crew walk together in newly issued N.A.S.A. jumpsuits. Bear and Jumbo have ripped the sleeves and collars off their X-Large suits.

They walk past two N.A.S.A. mathematicians.

MATHEMATICIAN 1

(to mathematician 2)

We're screwd.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Temple and Golden standing there with their arms crossed, watching the motley crew of Roughnecks. They're joined by U.S.A.F. test pilots COLONEL SHARP, a young Chuck Yeager type, and LT. COLONEL LUCAS TRUMAN, 30's, rigid and muscular.

SHARP

I mean, they kind of look like Armstarong, Lovell, and Glenn.

(turns, soberly to Golden)

So, my wife and little girls' lives are in their hands, sir?

GOLDEN

We need to drill. Do you know how to drill, colonel?

(beat)

Neither do I. They're going up.

TEMPLE  
 ((pointing to his  
 lapel)  
 With my stars came the power to be  
 blunt. These drillers are not trained  
 for this, Dan.

Truman shakes his head. Sharp eyes Golden, waiting for a response.

GOLDEN  
 General, it's our job to get them  
 ready to go into space. They're there  
 to do the drilling.  
 (beat, then)  
 And Colonel Sharp, we all have  
 families.

A hard look from Sharp to Temple, as Golden walks away.

TEMPLE  
 (to Golden)  
 If they can't drill this hole, my  
 men are going to take over.

INT. N.A.S.A. - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DAY

Quincy is face-to-face with Golden. TECHS work on the drilling arm in the b.g. Harry and the Roughtnecks are across the room.

HARRY  
 That Armadillo car. Get it in here.

In rolls the Armadillo, two TECHNICIANS pushing it. Harry and the guys look at it. Quincy shows it off.

QUINCY  
 Pressurised titanium alloy cab.  
 Airlocked life support. The chassis's  
 by General Motors. Heavy duty  
 suspension and six wheel drive.

HARRY  
 How were you going to power your  
 drill arm?

QUINCY  
 Turbo-jet engine fuelled by Kerosene  
 and liquid oxygen.

HARRY  
 I need to be able to start and stop.  
 I need different speeds, and I need  
 reverse.

QUINCY

A jet engine can't do that.

HARRY

It can if it's hooked up to a clutch.  
A.J., get me a Mack truck  
transmission.

QUINCY

That's so simple it's brilliant.

HARRY

I'm a simple man. But don't  
underestimate me.

A.J.

Chick, Max! Mack truck tranny!

Chick and Max hurry off. A.J. smiles at Harry.

INT. JOHNSON CTR - ASTRONAUT TRAINING - WORKROOM - DAY

Harry, A.J., Bennie, Chick, Max, and Tito sit before Quincy,  
who demonstrates a series of components on the N.A.S.A. SPACE  
SUIT.

QUINCY

The new generation EMU -  
Extravehicular Mobility Unit -  
provides oxygen for seven hours, a  
pressurised enclosure, and temperate  
control. The gloves and helmet slide  
on and lock with a twist, like this.  
The cap is worn underneath. It  
contains a mike and headphones for  
two-way communication. We'll be  
able to see you from a small video  
cam mounted inside the helmet. The  
Undergarment has 300 feet of plastic  
tubing circulating cooling water.  
Owen...

OWEN THE TAILOR, five foot nothing & bald, stands in front  
of the men.

OWEN

These are made for men 5'8" to 6'2",  
between 140 and 200 pounds. All of  
you fit within those parameters -  
thank God we won't have to do any re-  
tailoring....

Owen stops because --

Bear and Jumbo stand in the doorway --

JUMBO

Yo. This where we get our suits?

BEAR

Sorry, we're late. Doc said we had...  
What do we got?

JUMBO

Cholesterol difficulties. Said we  
gotta enter "The Zone."

BEAR

Shit, the only zone I know is the  
one around my mama's grill.

JUMBO

(Holding up form)  
But we're approved.

Owen looks at the human mountains standing before him, and  
then at the tiny EMU suit. Alterations will be necessary.

INT. JOHNSON CENTER - ASTRONAUT TRAINING - MORNING

Clark briefs Harry and the mildly attentive Roughnecks. Sharp,  
Truman, CO-PILOTS MEGAN WATTS (30's, tough as nails) and  
STAN WESTON stand in the back along with N.A.S.A. Engineers  
JACK CROSS and RAYMOND SEARS.

CLARK

United States astronauts train for  
eighteen months. You have nine days.  
Officers Sharp, Truman, Watts and  
Weston are your military instructors  
and the only pilots to have flown  
the spacecraft.

(beat)

Each is a combat decorated officer  
and among the finest men and women  
we have in the service. Pay attention  
to them.

SHARP

We spend six months on emergency  
training - we're throwing that out.  
If we fail, everyone dies. Game over.  
That's a heavy load but it's ours to  
carry. The purpose of this is  
to train you in the physical and  
mental rigors of working in a  
weightless environment so that you  
will not panic. So you can do your  
jobs.

CLARK

(beat)

You will vomit. Your eyes will be sucked into the back of your heads. You'll be so tired you can't eat but that won't matter 'cause you'll be so sore you can't take a dump. By the way...good morning.

INT. NEUTRAL BUOYANCY TANK - DAY

Splash, Splash. Harry and the Roughnecks descend underwater. They look like Michelin Men in their thick space suits. Navy divers are around them as they are lined up.

Through the underwater speaker, WE HEAR a trainer giving them instructions for their weightless aerobic training. WE HEAR a loud, embarrassing gastric sound from Bear's suit.

BEAR

Houton, we have a problem. That is some vicious methane.

Harry gives a "shut the fuck up" look. Time passes as the guys are dying, HUFFING and PUFFING. One by one, they reach exhaustion. A cabled harness hoists each out.

INT. JOHNSON CENTER - CARDIO LAB - DAY

Harry and his team, in T-shirts and running shorts, jog on a series of treadmills, wired to EKG machines, nostrils taped shut, breathing tubes

LOCKED IN THEIR MOUTHS. EXT. N.A.S.A. T-38 JET HANGER - DAY

A gleaming spit-shine hanger full of fifteen N.A.S.A. T-38 fighter jets.

Our drill team walks up looking worn out. They are met at the open hanger door by pilots CHUCK JR., Vietnam vet, leatherneck-take-no-pussy-bullshit-type-of-guy and HAMMER.

CHUCK JR.

On this mission, they tell me you will experience the worst G-Forces in the history of flight. It's like an elephant sitting on your chest. So, I intend to flip you, spin you, splat your bodies till your bones hurt. Now load up and enjoy the flight.

The Roughnecks, wearing flight suits and helmets, board the planes. Harry does not like the look of these things. Bear is trying to figure out how to fit inside.

BEAR  
Thing's made for a child - like my  
kid's car seat.

Chuck Jr. and Hammer walk up to a nervous Harry.

CHUCK JR.  
What's the problem, Texas tough guy?

HARRY  
I've got a thing about flying.

CHUCK JR.  
Not good for an astronaut.  
(looks to Hammer)  
Hammer, go easy, don't rip his guts  
out.

HAMMER  
Sure thing, Chuck.

INT. JET FIGHTER.

Harry plastered to the seat, MOANING so scared he can't puke.  
The plane barrel-rolls and dives straight to the ground.  
Harry is GRUNTING and sweating trying to stay conscious.

EXT. N.A.S.A. T-38 JET HANGER - DAY

The T-38's are pulling up and letting the drill crew out.  
They walk back with white sweat, soaked faces and wobbly  
legs. Harry exits the plane.

HARRY  
I hate to fly. I hate to fly. I hate  
it so much.

Harry leans over to puke.

INT. N.A.S.A. T-38 JET HANGER - DAY

The Roughnecks walking to the T-38 Hanger. Sharp stands on  
the stairway to the 707 and calls everyone to attention.

SHARP  
Trainees, AT EASE  
(in command)  
We are not done here. We're taking  
you for a little ride. This bird  
will climb to 40 thousand feet and  
drop to 10 thousand feet to give you  
the feeling of weightlessness for 30  
seconds. Welcome to N.A.S.A.'s Vomit  
Comet.

INT. VOMIT COMET

The plane drops. The Roughnecks lift off inside. Everyone's flying around the cabin. It's a disaster. Guys bump heads. Bear floats like a beached whale. Jumbo rams the roof. Hary hold a barf bag as he floats. An alarm SOUNDS, then the plane levels off, the guys go slamming into the floor.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER BATHROOM

Tracking past a row of stalls, WE SEE the soles of a pair of shoes peeking out. Then another pair, another, and another over the multiple sounds of guts being tossed into the toilet.

Golden, Clark, and Sharp stand outside the stalls.

GOLDEN  
This is like putting the Hell's Angels in space.

INT. N.A.S.A. RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Harry and the Roughnecks are welding the Armadillo, working tough and hard.

INT. N.A.S.A. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The Roughnecks are getting dressed.

MAX  
(to Chick)  
We're going to go pound some brews where they have a lot of sweaty, naked women. You in?

CHICK  
(shakes head)  
No. I got to take care of something.

The Roughnecks walk out, leaving Chick behind.

INT N.A.S.A. CAR - NIGHT

Driven by a uniformed N.A.S.A. TECH, Chick pulls up to a house in a residential neighbourhood. He sits there with a beat, unsure of what to do.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Chick walks up to the house, KNOCKS. DENISE WILLIAMS answers the door.

CHICK  
Hey, Denise.

DENISE  
What do you want, Chick?

A big six-year old boy, TOMMY, runs up behind his mom.

TOMMY  
Who is it, Mommy?

Chick looks at Tommy, smiles.

DENISE  
It's um...just a salesman, honey.

CHICK  
Hi.

TOMMY  
(looking straight up)  
You look like big foot.

Chick kneels, extends his hand. Tommy smiles and shakes it.  
Chick doesn't want to let go.

CHICK  
I got a feeling you're going to be  
pretty big yourself.

DENISE  
Go inside and play, Tommy.

TOMMY  
Okay, mommy. 'Bye, Big Foot.

CHICK  
'Bye, Tommy.

Chick watches Tommy run off. He looks to Denise.

DENISE  
What was I supposed to tell him?  
We've got a life here now, Chick,  
with someone we can depend on.

CHICK  
What I did before was wrong. Every  
day of my life I regret it. I can  
see you've got a good thing going,  
Denise, I'm not trying to mess that  
up. But this thing's come my way and  
I got the chance to do something  
really right.

DENISE  
This another one of your scams, Chick?

CHICK  
It's no scam. You might just be proud  
of me.



Denise opens the door a little wider, SHE SEES the car in the driveway. The N.A.S.A. logo stencilled on the door. The N.A.S.A. Tech waiting.

DENISE  
What's going on, Chick?

CHICK  
I can't tell you now. But if it comes out good, I'll be back.  
(beat)  
Then maybe you'd consider telling Tommy I'm not a...salesman. It's good to see you. You look really beautiful.

Chick turns and walks away.

DENISE  
Hey, Chick.  
(Chick turns)  
You be careful.

INT. LUCKY LAURIE'S - NIGHT

A seedy Houston drinking hole. All the Roughnecks sit at the bar. The bar is littered with EMPTY MUGS AND SHOTGLASSES. A WOMAN looks at Bennie.

WOMAN  
What are you boys doin' down here in good 'ol Houston?

BENNIE  
(burps)  
We're in astronaut training.

This gets the reaction you'd expect.

INT. JOHNSON CENTER - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - LATE NIGHT

Harry and Quincy go over a list of stuff to order and logistical problems.

N.A.S.A. Tech rushes into the room.

N.A.S.A. TECH  
Space Command spotted more incoming.

QUINCY  
(springing up)  
Where' it headed? How big?

N.A.S.A. TECH  
Don't know.

They start to run out of the room. Harry follows.

INT. ROCKET ENGINE DEVELOPMENT ROOM

The camera follows up a long ladder to a huge rocket bell housing where A.J. and Grace are kissing passionately. They notice Harry and Quincy, and the other Techs heading for Mission Control. Harry locks eyes with A.J. He doesn't like it. A.J. and Grace know something is up. They follow Harry and the others into Mission Control.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - LATE NIGHT

The room is lit up. Men are scrambling. Phones and satellite charts pop up.

Tracking devices PING. Golden on top of the chaos. A TRACKING TECH plots on a map. Clark stands over a N.A.S.A. TECH reading a computer screen.

GOLDEN

Projected impact tracking. I need stats!

TRACKING TECH

Eastern Asian Hemisphere...  
someplace...ETA 17 minutes.

N.A.S.A. TECH

We have confirmation. The incoming is about the size of the Astrodome.

CLARK

We've got to warn.

GOLDEN

Warn who? The whole South Pacific?

Golden, with lack of sleep and stress, falls back into a chair. He closes his eyes, opens them -- finding Harry in the upper Mission Control Deck.

They lock eyes for a long moment.

INT. SHANGHAI - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

The city ablaze in neon. The harbour, floating junksmanned by Chinese merchants. A loud sonic boom CRACKS in the sky. There's a BRIGHT FLASH in the sky. Night becomes day for two seconds.

The world slows down, motion creeps. The bright FLASH catches the face of a little BOY reaching out for his father's hand. The asteroid SHRIEKS down, hitting the harbour's surface in a red hot FLASH-BOILED at 100 thousand degrees.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

The room is silent. Reports are starting to come in about the devastation. Golden walks up to Harry who is standing with Grace and A.J. He pulls Harry aside.

GOLDEN

Stamper, answer me one question -  
have you ever let anyone down?

We go close on Harry's face. Searing flashbulbs popping,  
WIDEN TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE PRESS ROO - NIGHT

WE SEE him from behind as he addresses the massive crowd.  
The U.S.

PRESIDENT stands before a throng of reporters.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Papers headlines, CNN reporters flash on screens. Images of people watching the news in bars, at home. A NEW YORK POST slams down on the pavement, the headline: SHANGHAI DISASTER, MASSIVE DEATH TOLL RISING.

INT. SOMEPLACE IN KENTUCKY - HOLDING CELL - DAWN

Jimbo is talking to an F.B.I. AGENT who is on the other side of the bars holding a newspaper.

JIMBO

If it's over then why aren't you  
lettin' us out of this goddamn cell?

F.B.I. AGENT

Be real soon, son.

The agent flips the newspaper into the holding cell and walks away.

JIMBO

Don't walk away, I want to talk to  
my lawyer. You hear me?

PEARL

(referring to the  
newspaper)

This says that the asteroid came  
from the Southern Hemisphere.

THEO

Southern Hemisphere?

PEARL

No kidding. It's a big sky - they  
want people to look the other way.

INT. MANHATTEN - TAXI CAB

Stu the cabbie is riding with a WALL STREET GUY.

STU

Kennedy lied about the Bay of Pigs,  
Nixon...Watergate, say no more.  
Clinton. One word. 'Women.' If I  
know one thing; ALL PRESIDENTS LIE.

INT. N.A.S.A. - TRAINING ROOM - MORNING

Morning after the devastating disaster in Shanghai. Harry  
walks into the quiet room. Harry's all business.

HARRY

Forty thousand people died last night.  
But I guess that didn't concern any  
of you. I hope you all had a good  
time last night.

The Roughnecks look around. They know there were wrong.

CHICK

I gotta tell you...I'm scared.

HARRY

Well, you should be scared. We all  
should be. 'Cause if we fail, they  
say the Earth will die.

Harry sits down, looks out the window at N.A.S.A. Techs  
working in the room down below.

HARRY

You think these N.A.S.A. guys are a  
bunch of clean-cut pussies, that's  
it. They can out think you, they can  
outrun you. This job, gentlemen, is  
as real as it gets. I need every one  
of you.

(he looks them in the  
eye)

If you're not up to it, then walkout  
of that door.

Finally. Theo and Pearl, frustrated, go to the TWO-WAY MIRROR,  
blocking Jimbo from view.

THEO

I'm hungry! When're we gonna eat?

PEARL

I have p.m.s.!! I need some ibuprofen!

Jimbo grabs Randy's legal pad and writes:

HELP!! BIG ASTEROID GOING TO HIT EARTH. COORDINATES 712 BY 345.

Randy stares at the message.

RANDY

Okay, I'm done here!

The door opens. Two F.B.I. AGENTS lead Randy out. Jimbo looks at Theo and Pearl.

JIMBO

He flunked the bar three times.

INT. N.A.S.A. - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

-- Harry shows Quincy his DRAWINGS of the DRILLING ARM - the way Harry wants it.

-- Harry, A.J. and Quincy work with the TURBO PROP ENGINE, transforming it into a JET FUEL GENERATOR.

QUINCY

We'll run your liquid oxygen from the shuttle through a tube into the intake manifold. No problem.

A.J.

I figured out how to bring up the slag. Direct the jet turbine's exhaust down the drill pipe. It'll blow the stuff right up the hole.

HARRY

Good, A.J. Good.

-- Chick, Bennie, Bear, Jumbo welding new pieces of the DRILLING ARM together. The Roughnecks have changed. Chick and Bennie now have crew-cuts.

-- A.J., Harry, Max and Tito build the drilling arm.

EXT. ARIZONA - SHUTTLE TAKE OFF AREA

TWO X-71 SHUTTLES in the hanger. TECHNICIANS scramble around, preparing the shuttles for the mission.

HARRY

(points)

From all of your intel, the deepest fault line is here.

(MORE)

---

HARRY (CONT'D)

This is my sweet spot. If I can get  
a clean hole in there, She'll blow  
in half....

GOLDEN

...and the two pieces will slide  
right past us. You cannot shatter  
it. Getting hit with 20 smaller  
asteroids is as bad as one big one.  
You have to drill, plant the nuke,  
lift off, and detonate -- all before  
the asteroid reaches this position.

(demonstrates position)

You have eight hours. Remember it.  
You must detonate by this point or,  
the two halves will hit us.

Harry nods and walks off.

SHARP

Drill an eight-hundred foot hole in  
eight hours? Is that possible?

Harry doesn't like to be questioned --

HARRY

You just worry about getting me on  
that rock, Colonel. Let me worry  
about the drilling.

A moment of conflict between them.

EXT. JOHNSON CENTE - ASTRONAUT TRAINING - DAY

ONE OF THE ARMADILLOS, complete with drilling arm, sits at  
the bottom of the tank. Harry and six Roughnecks are already  
at the bottom, in pressure suits and helmets.

Golden, Quincy, Clark, Sharp, Truman, and all of the N.A.S.A.  
BRASS, observe.

A.J. is the last to enter the tank.

INT. N.A.S.A. NEUTRAL BUOYANCY TANK - UNDERWATER

A.J. descend to the tank's bottom. Harry, Chick, Bennie, Max  
and Tito are in bulky white pressure suits. Jimbo and Bear  
wear the largest pressure suits ever made. They talk through  
their helmet radio links.

One drilling arm starts turning. The Roughnecks turn toward  
a STACK OF 20 FOOT LONG STAINLESS STEEL DRILLING PIPES on  
the tank's bottom. ABOVE WATER

SIDE OF TRAINING TANK

Golden hits a stopwatch.

GOLDEN  
(into intercom)  
Go.

INT. N.A.S.A. NEUTRAL BUOYANCY TANK - UNDERWATER

Bear and Jimbo grab a pipe string and handle onto the mock-up drill arm.

They clamp it on. Bennie and Chick screw a drill bit onto the pipe string.

They are good, very good. The work with the manic intensity of a pit crew at Indy.

HARRY  
Done!

ABOVE WATER - SIDE OF TANK

Golden hits his stopwatch. Smiles. The N.A.S.A. Brass is impressed.

GOLDEN  
These guys are fast. Harry, interior gauge check.

INT. N.A.S.A. NEUTRAL BUOYANCY TANK - UNDERWATER

HARRY  
We're on A.J.

A.J.  
Let's see what this baby can do.

Harry and A.J. move the Armadillo's AIRLOCK DOOR. It has an exterior open/close button. Harry punches it. The side door opens. Harry enters, then A.J.

INT. ARMADILLO - UNDERWATER

Harry and A.J., still underwater, climb inside. Harry presses the PRESSURIZATION button. Simulating pressurisation in space, the water in the cab is blown out, and air WHOOSHES IN.

Harry and A.J. sit dripping in the watertight cab. Through the front window WE SEE the other Roughnecks in the tank. Harry unlocks his neck seals.

Pulls off his helmet.

HARRY  
Lose the helmet, A.J.

A.J. snaps out of it. His hands go instinctively to the helmet and in one motion...CLICK. It's off.

HARRY  
(clicks radio)  
We're in. Run the simulation.

The interior PRESSURE GUGE NEEDLES and MONITORS (engine torque, drill direction, etc.) start bobbing. The drill starts to cut into a BLOCK OF CONCRETE.

GOLDEN (V.O.)  
How's she look?

HARRY  
Torque adjuster's good. Fuel level good. A.J., downhole pressure?

A.J.  
We can do better. I'm increasing the RPM's to seven thousand. We can get more torque.

GOLDEN (V.O.)  
Negative, A.J. Don't exceed ix thousand. Not on this run.

A.J.  
Relax. I built this thing. She's got more in her. Increasing the RPM's.

GOLDEN (V.O.)  
Negative, A.J.

A.J. increases the RPM's. The gauge starts to rise. The N.A.S.A. Brass shifts uneasily in their seats. They're not accoutomed to seeing their astronauts disobey orders.

GOLDEN (V.O.)  
A.J., shut the Armadillo down now.

A.J.  
We can push it, further. Let's see what she can do.

Suddenly, the RPM's shoot into the red. A red siren spins in the control room. The Armadillo SHAKES violently. The DRILLING BIT grinds to nothing.

The Armadillo BLOWS a tranny.

Harry's eyes close. He's pissed.

IN THE CONTROL ROOM

The N.A.S.A. Brass looks to Golden. One of them shakes their head. Sharp and Golden exchange a look.



Sharp shakes his head.

INSIDE THE TANK

A.J. presses a button and the cabin, simulating "depressurization" in space, begins to fill with water.

INT. NEUTRAL BUOYANCY TANK - SIDE OF TANK - DAY

Everyone around him just watches, as A.J. climbs out of the tank. After a minute, A.J. looks up, sees all the eyes in the room on him.

EXT. CREW QUARTERS - NIGHT

Harry is outside, smoking a Coheba. Harry runs his hand over a SMALL METAL MEDAL that hangs from his neck. Golden approaches.

GOLDEN

A.J.'s off the team. We need a list of names from you to fill the slot.

HARRY

A.J. would be the first name on my list.

GOLDEN

We don't want independent thinkers. And we don't need heroes. We need a team.

HARRY

You have to have confidence in the men you send up. I understand that. But I'm the one that has to land on that rock. Not you.

(firm)

I pick my own team.

GOLDEN

One shot. Pull him in line or send him home.

INT. HUB OF ROCKET SIMULATOR - NIGHT

A.J. and Grace are there talking. Grace is on A.J.'s lap.

A.J.

I pushed it, I screwed up.

GRACE

These astronauts train for years for what you're training for in a few days.

A.J.  
I don't know why I didn't just listen  
to them.

GRACE  
So, tomorrow you listen.

A.J. and Grace share a look.

A.J.  
I love you, Grace.

A N.A.S.A. Tech approaches.

N.A.S.A. TECHNICIAN  
Harry wants to see you.

INT. DESIGN AND PROTOTYPE ROOM - NIGHT

Harry and A.J. stand in the centre of a high-tech supply  
room. SPARE PARTS from shuttles, PROTOTYPES and WORK TOOLS  
are everywhere.

HARRY  
You tell me what the hell you think  
you're doing?

A.J.  
I'm trying to work with the team.

HARRY  
Bullshit. You're trying to lead this  
team. You're trying to be me. You're  
not me.

A.J.  
What do you want? You want me to  
quit?

HARRY  
If you can't bury this cowboy shit,  
yeah, I want you to quit.

A.J.  
I don't have to prove anything to  
anybody, Harry.

HARRY  
I listen to N.A.S.A., you listen to  
me. That's the chain. Either you  
follow it, or you're done.

A.J.  
I'll follow it.

---

HARRY

I stood up for you, because I've  
made a life of proving people wrong.

Harry's hand slides down to the medal hanging from his neck.

HARRY

When I was about your age, I was in  
Galveston, Texas. I scraped together  
some money, bought some old equipment,  
a little land. I set up a rig and  
drilled my first hole. Then I sat  
there and watched her soak up the  
sun for six months -waiting for this  
baby to pop. Everybody told me to  
quit. I wouldn't listen. My wife ran  
off with a drill-rigger, left me  
with Grace. Everybody in town thought  
I was a fool. But I stayed with it.  
And in the last hour of the last  
day, she popped. She spit out that  
black gold and I danced in it like a  
wild Indian.

(reflective)

I captured the magic.

(holding medal)

This is the last piece of pipe that  
struck gold that day.

Harry takes off the medal. Sets it on the table. He grabs a  
cutting vice and cuts the medal in two perfect halves. He  
hands one half to A.J.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Here, take it up there.

QUICK MONTAGE

Inside the neutral buoyancy tank -- Harry's crew goes through  
all DRILLS one final time (final mission checks) in quick  
succession. Everything runs perfectly. The Armadillo is  
rebuilt and shown functioning without error. A.J. works as  
part of the team.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - DAY

The hour of the mission. The two teams sit in the orange  
N.A.S.A. flight pressure suits. Golden enters and stands  
before the room.

GOLDEN

In the book of Revalations, the Bible  
speaks of a final day on Earth, when  
all mankind shall perish, shall cease  
to exist. This day is known as  
Armageddon.

(MORE)

GOLDEN (CONT'D)

(firm)

Right now, that day conflicts with six billion schedules.

(beat)

For the first time in the history of this planet, a species possesses the technology to prevent its own extinction.

(beat)

I've been with N.A.S.A. my entire adult life. Eleven years as an astronaut, another fifteen on the ground at Mission Control. Twenty-six years I've had to answer one question -- why? Why more money? Why the race for space? Why do we need to know what is up there?

(beat)

When we come through this, I'll take comfort in the fact that I won't ever have to answer those questions again. You are our warriors up there. You are our last hope. God be with you.

The crew stands.....

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - RUNWAY - DAY

Two sleek BLACK LEAR JETS are parked on the runway. Harry studies them.

Grace approaches.

HARRY

You know I was thinking, Gracie. Over the years, I should have patted you on the back more....

GRACE

Dad, you don't need --

HARRY

No father has ever been prouder of his child, Gracie. I want you to know that.

Grace's reaction makes it clear that Harry has never said anything like this before.

GRACE

I love you, Dad.

HARRY

I love you too, Gracie.

GRACE  
(as they hug)  
Keep an eye on A.J. for me.

Harry climbs up the metal stairs --

A.J. and the rest of Harry's crew comes out of the building. A.J. moves to Grace as she watches her father disappear into the jet.

A.J.  
Excuse me.  
(Grace turns)  
You're really insanely gorgeous and  
I was jost sort of wondering if you --

GRACE  
I'm engaged. But my father hasn't  
given him his blessing so you might  
still have a chance.  
(smiles, then serious)  
Promise me you won't do anything  
stupid up there.

A.J. nods. They kiss passionately. Harry's crew sees this and applauds. Grace blushes, embarrassed.

A.J.  
I love you, Grace.

GRACE  
I love you. Come back, Okay?

Harry's crew boards LEAR JET 2. A.J. starts toward LEAR JET 1. Grace watches him walk away, eyeing his suit.

GRACE  
A.J.--

A.J.  
(turning)  
Yeah?

GRACE  
When you get back, ask them if you  
can keep the suit.  
(winks)  
It's kind of sexy.

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT - BY SHUTTLE FREEDOM

The cone-shaped noses of the two X-71's are towering silhouettes against the sun. Massive CRAWLERS move the shuttles to the launch tower.

EXT. SHUTTLES FREEDOM & INDEPENDENCE LAUNCH - DAY

Seen from a distance as silhouettes behind a sun-soaked sky, sixteen figures walk toward us. As they grow closer, WE SEE the intense game faces of Harry, A.J., Bennie, Chick, Jumbo, Tito, Rockhound, Max and others approaching the launch site. They look like N.A.S.A.'s version of the "Dirty Dozen."

Harry carries a LARGE MYSTERIOUS METAL CASE, that we've not seen before now.

INT. LAUNCH TOWER ELEVATOR - LATER

Harry exits the elevator and start to walk to the CATWAL to the Freedom shuttle. Harry carries his suitcase.

N.A.S.A. TECH 1

Sir, was that case authorised for transport?

N.A.S.A. TECH 2

Our weight to fuel ratio's calibrated to the kilogram, sir. How much does that weigh?

HARRY

Sixty pounds.

N.A.S.A. TECH 1

That can't go up with you, sir.

HARRY

Wait here.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - AFTERNOON

Harry enters the cabin. N.A.S.A.'s crack seven-member "Strap-in-Team" goes to work. Harry's crew are outfitted with their HELMETS and CHUTE PACKS.

Each step is methodical, each piece of equipment is checked and rechecked.

HARRY

Hey you. Yeah you. Come here.

A YOUNG N.A.S.A. TECH approaches. Harry gestures at a row of METAL COMPONENTS housed in the wall.

HARRY

What's all this crap?

N.A.S.A. TECHNICIAN

(pointing to various)  
Multi-track C.D. player.

(MORE)

---

N.A.S.A. TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)  
Anti-gravity hand washer, utensil  
washer, and micro-wave oven.  
(proud)  
We worked hard to make the X-71 feel  
more like home.

Harry just looks at the kid.

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT - BY SHUTTLE FREEDOM - DAY

Metal components one after the other come out of the shuttle hatchway and SLAM into a heap on the lake bed. Harry then appears in the hatchway.

HARRY  
We don't need music and we don't  
mind dirty utensils.

Harry picks up his LARGE METAL CASE and ducks back inside the Freedom. The N.A.S.A Techs stare at the ruined components at their feet.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DUSK

Golden and Clark prepare for the launch.

N.A.S.A. TECH  
(into intercom)  
T-minus six minutes and counting.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT - DUSK

Sharp and Watts settle in. MAJORS PITTS and FISK, two stern Army demolition experts, finish tying down their equipment.

MISSION CONTROL (V.O.)  
Roger, Independence and Freedom,  
auto ground launch sequencer  
commencing.

Sharp looks at Pitts and Fisk

SHARP  
You two ready?

PITTS  
(enthusiastically)  
AIRBORNE!

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DUSK

Golden, Clark and the N.A.S.A. Techs study the CENTRAL BOARD as final preparations for take-off commence.

- - -

TECHNICIAN  
Shuttles Freedom and Independence  
you are cleared for lift off.

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT - SHUTTLE TAKE OFF ZONE - DUSK

The ground TREMBLES like an earthquake. EXHAUST BILLOWS out of the ROCKET BOOSTERS, filling frame.

Shuttles Freedom and Independence ROCKET OFF from dual launch pads, STREAKING BETWEEN CAMERA, climbing to the heavens.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT - DUSK

Sharp and Watts flip switches, check gauges.

SHARP  
Instituting roll manoeuvre. We have  
S.R.B. Sep, over.

INT N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DUSK

TECHNICIAN  
You are a 'go' for ET separation.

EXT. UPPER ATMOSPHERE - DUSK

Freedom and Independence scream away from Earth, dropping their booster canisters.

EXT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - DUSK

Harry, Chick and the others experience their first G-Forces.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DUSK

CLARK  
Lookin' real good, Freedom.

GOLDEN  
When you meet the Russian, you might  
want to go easy on the guy.

He just broke the record for the longest solo - thirteen months, seven days.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

CHICK  
(to Harry)  
Thirteen months, seven days.  
(beat)  
What the hell has he been doing all  
by himself?



INT. RUSSIAN MIR STATION

Life inside, like the cluttered glove-box of an old car.  
George Michael's

"Freedom" plays on a piped-in sound system. COSMONAUT LEV  
ANDROPOV dances and sings.

LEV  
FREEDOM! FREEDOM! GOT TO GIVE WHAT  
IT TAKES....Hello Yankees! I love  
you America.  
(reading from English  
book)  
Would you prefer an appetiser or  
aperitif?

EXT. RUSSIAN MIR SPACE STATION

PULL OUT of the MIR's window to see Lev dancing with joy.  
He's celebrating the forthcoming arrival.

PULL FURTHER BACK to catch a wider view of the Russian multi-  
module Space Station -- a white winged steel seagull.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Through the cockpit window, the BLUENESS of Earth's atmosphere  
becomes the BLACKNESS of space.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

CLARK  
Freedom, Independence. You're looking  
good. Prepare to start docking  
procedures at the MIR.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Sharp addresses the crews of both shuttles over the radio --

SHARP  
Listen up -- the MIR will be spinning  
to give us gravity so we can work  
faster. You might feel queasy or  
dizzy. We'll dock, transfer the fuel,  
then detach from the MIR. Fast and  
safe. This stuff is very volatile.

INT. RUSSIAN MIR SPACE STATION - DOCKING PORT

Lev is working feverishly, running highly insulated liquid  
oxygen and hydrogen PROPELLANT TRANSFER HOSES from the MIR's  
several LABORATORY and LIVING MODULES to the MIR's twin  
docking ports.

---

A BLUE INDICATOR LIGHT FLASHES. Lev looks out of the MIR's portside window.

His eyes light up. He smiles.

EXT. SPACE - LOW EARTH ORBIT - MIR DOCKING PORTS

Freedom and Independence approach the MIR station. The MIR is T-shaped, with TWIN DOCKING PORTS at each end of the T's crossbar. Freedom begins docking at one end., Independence at the other.

INT. SHUTTLES FREEDOM/INDEPENDENCE - AIRLOCK PORT TO MIR

TRUMAN

Fuel teams prepare to unload.

A RED LIGHT (unsafe) turns GREEN (safe). The docking port's HATCHWHEEL spins, and the door slides open. Harry, Sharp, Watts, Chick, A.J., Bennie, and Truman enter the MIR.

INT. MIR SPACE STATION - DOCKING MODULE

The TEAM comes through the docking module and out pops Lev, hanging upside down in frame.

LEV

HELLO YANKEES! Welcome to the home  
of me, Cosmonaut Lev Andropov.

On a wall, A COMPUTER BOARD that monitors the fuel transfer is filled with GREEN LIGHTS.

INT. CENTRAL ROOM - CENTER HUB OF MIR

Harry, Bennie, and Lev are talking in the combination kitchen/rec room of the MIR -- a little bigger than a walk-in closet. Lev grabs a VIDEO CAMERA and starts video-taping Harry and Bennie.

LEV

I hear rumour on radio. My country  
broke. No steaks in freezer. They  
plan to sell me and the MIR  
(moving in closer,  
conspiratorial)  
Can you confirm this?

BENNIE

We wouldn't know. What's the camera?

LEV

Oh, I also di-rec-tor. Russian cinema.  
MIR movies. Each has title.

Lev grabs remote control. On a large TELEVISION screen VARIOUS IMAGES OF LEV appear.

- - -

LEV  
"Lev loves cargo." "Lev sleeps."  
"Lev prepares for Americans." "Lev  
gets bored so he gets drunk." Funny  
but...too long.

BENNIE  
Looks like you have a lot of free  
time on your hands.

LEV  
Yeah. I alone by myself.

Watts comes into the room. The first woman Lev has seen in a  
very, very long time. Lev moves the camera all over her.

LEV  
Hello, fellow space colleague.

Watts nods.

WATTS  
I'll be in the docking port.

LEV  
Please allow me to escort you.  
(as they walk out)  
You California girl?

INT. MIR SPACE STATION - REAR MODULES

Harry and Bennie enter the MIR's rearmost module. Two  
propellant hoses run into TWIN PROPELLANT OUTPUT VALVES on a  
rear panel. Bennie's eyes move to a LAUNDRY LINE. BOXERS  
hang from the line.

BENNIE  
This Lev guy is a little off.

On the computer board, a small RED LIGHT replaces the GREEN  
LIGHT. Then another. No one notices.

INT. MIR STATION - DOCKING PORTS

CAMERA FOLLOWS MICROSCOPIC AEROSOL BUBBLES OF LIQUID OXYGEN  
(MACRO SHOT) DRIPPING from a valve onto a COMPUTER CIRCUIT  
BOARD.

INT. MIR - FUEL STORAGE

THE GAUGE STARTS TO rise. A.J. WATCHES. One hundred eighty-  
five...190...195...

A.J.  
(into intercom)  
Lev, the pressure's climbing.

INT. MIR CORRIDOR

(EXTREME MACRO) The Liquid Oxygen oozes into the circuit board. Surgeon-like microscopic camera tracks it under the keys, reaching a COMPUTER SWITCH. It SPARKS.

INT. DOCKING PORT

Lev, Sharp, and Chick are walking toward the shuttles. The ELECTRICITY in the MIR FLUTTERS. Lev stops. Sharp stops. Lev looks over his shoulder toward the central hub. A chill runs down his spine. DOLLY INTO LEV'S EYES

LEV  
(whispering)  
Leak. Run.

Lev and Sharp run toward the central hub. Lev punches a KLAXON.

LEV (CONT'D)  
LEAK! RUN!

Chick takes off running past Lev and Sharp.

SHARP  
(to Chick)  
E-vac. E-vac. Unhook the shuttles.  
Move!

INT. MIR - FUEL STORAGE

A.J. reacts to the KLAXON, starts to climb up the shaft ladder. A.J. struggles under the heavy weight of his cold suit, finally reaching ---

INT. MIR - CORRIDOR ABOVE FUEL STORAGE

Circuits pop VIOLENTLY all around A.J., as the mixture of chemical in the air starts to CHEW the MIR's walls.

INT. MIR - CENTRAL HUB

Lev, Sharp, and Chick RUN into the hub as the leak continues, growing rapidly worse, EATING the walls. Sharp sees the LEAK. Runs back toward the docking port.

LEV  
(to Sharp)  
Seal door.

As Sharp SEALS the hatch, Lev returns to look for A.J.

INT. MIR STATION - REAR MODULE

Harry and Chick react to the KLAXOX BLARES.

...

HARRY  
Unhook the shuttles.

Harry and Chick RUN out of the rear module and race through the maze of twisting corridors.

INT. MIR CORRIDOR

A.J. runs through another corridor, heading for the docking port as the walls around him POP! Lev flies around the corner almost smashing into A.J.

INT. MIR STATION - REAR MODULE

The smoking circuitry SPARKS, and the REAR MODULE explodes in a VIOLENT CONCUSSION, LAUNCHING A LONG TONGUE OF FLAME into -- INT. MIR STATION -

UPPER MODULES

Harry and Chick race for the DOCKING MODULE as -- BEHIND THEM, A SECOND MODULE fills with FIRE and EXPLODES, rocking the MIR. Then a third. Fire starts to RIP THROUGH corridors in the MIR.

EXT. MIR STATION - SPACE

The MIR shudders and begins to TILT TO ONE SIDE.

INT. MIR STATION - UPPER MODULES

Everything is SIDEWAYS. Lev is KNOCKED to the ground. A HEAVY COMPUTER BOARD falls, separating A.J. and Lev.

Attempting to reach A.J., Lev turns back and runs from where he just came.

INT. MIR STATION - UPPER MODULES - SEALED CORRIDOR

A.J. looks left, then right. He doesn't know how to get to the docking port. He starts running.

INT. MIR STATION - DOCKING PORTS

Sharp re-joins Bennie and Truman. They unhook the FUEL LINES to the shuttles. Sharp and Chick run aboard Shuttle Freedom. Truman boards Independence.

INT. MIR CORRIDOR

A.J. is at the corridor fork. Right or left? The Russian writing above both paths doesn't help. Just as he's about to go left -- Lev suddenly appears, grabs A.J., and PUSHES HIM into the RIGHT CORRIDOR.

LEV  
Run Yankee!

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

SHARP  
(to Watts as he sits  
and buckles up)  
Shut the doors and fire her up!

WATTS  
We still have people out there.

SHARP  
It's them or ALL OF US. CLOSE THE  
DOORS NOW!

As the doors are closing, Harry and Chick rush into Shuttle Freedom.

Harry's fingers grab the doors just in time. The doors retract back.

HARRY  
Did A.J. make it?

CHICK  
I didn't see him.

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE

Truman buckles himself in, fires up the Independence.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Freedom is fired up. The MIR shudders again. TILTS further.

SHARP  
We have to GO!

INT. MIR CORRIDOR

A.J. and Lev are running hard as DEBRIS falls behind them and the walls start to TEAR APART. They turn a corner, headed toward the docking port --

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Harry is at the door, eyes frantically searching for A.J. --

SHARP  
WE GO NOW!

Sharp stabs a button on his pilot console. The AUTOMATED DOORS BEGIN to slide shut.

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE

Truman stabs a button on his pilot console. The AUTOMATED DOORS BEGIN to slide shut.

INT. MIR DOCKING PORT

A.J. and Lev race into the docking port from a rear corridor. Harry sees them. Lev dives into Independence just as the doors close. A.J. dives head-long through the shutting Independence doors.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

SHARP  
(to Watts)  
Full thrusters!

EXT. MIR STATION - SHUTTLES FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE

The two shuttles RELEASE AWAY from the MIR Station on FULL THRUSTER POWER, just escaping as --

THE MIR STATION EXPLODES in an eternal flash fire, blowing out sections of wall panels and sending a SOLAR PANEL shooting toward Freedom that just misses her! The collapsed MIR STATION drifts off into the oblivion of space.

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE

A.J. sits panting on the floor of the shuttle next to the docking port door. Lev stares down at him.

LEV  
I am Cosmonaut Lev Andropov, what  
your name?

A.J.  
My name is A.J.

LEV  
You just blew up my home.

SUPER: TWENTY THREE HOURS TO THE MOON

Golden and Sharp sitting around going over data. New images of the closer, meaner asteroid approaching.

INT. FREEDOM

Interior small sleeping area. Max hanging upside-down in zero gravity.

Wakes up yawning. He looks to Bear.

MAX  
Oh, man, did I have a dream.

BEAR  
So did Martin Luthor King.

MAX

No, this was a bad dream. We were drilling and the ground ate the bit. Then it ate the pipe, then the derrick. Then it ate us.

BEAR

That's a dumb-ass dream.

MAX

I'm not coming home.

They look at each other.

INT. FREEDOM COCKPIT

Harry, Bear, Chick, and Sharp stand looking out the cockpit rear window toward the brilliant blue Earth.

BEAR

What are you thinking about, Chick?

CHICK

My kid. You.

BEAR

My Mom, she'd be proud to see me as an astronaut.

CHICK

Harry, what are you thinking?

HARRY

(looking at Earth)

How beautiful it is. Thinkin' about all that oil I sucked out and spit into the air. Funny how a man can live 46 years and realize he ain't been doing the right thing.

INT. N.A.S.A. - PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM

BEHIND A CURTAIN - Golden confers with Collinswood.

COLLINSWOOD

The President is counting on you to put out the fire, Dan. Say whatever you have to. Just do it.

Golden walks from behind the curtain. Walks up to the podium, ten VIDEO CAMERAS swivel into position.

For a long moment Golden just stands there, saying nothing.



GOLDEN

I work for the President of the United States.

(long pause; looks over at Collinswood)

But I think it's my duty as a scientist to tell the world what is happening. Three, days ago a manned space mission was sent to intercept an asteroid which has entered the Earth's orbit.

(REPORTERS all chatter)

This is a difficult mission. In all frankness, it is the most difficult mission anyone has ever flown.

(beat)

A little over fifty years ago we sent our Armed Forces half-way around the world to save the world from an evil empire that threatened mass extinction. The men and women of this nation united, answered the call and preserved our freedom.

(beat)

Once again we face a threat to our way of life. And once again we look to our military to preserve our future. The men and women selected to lead this mission are America's finest and most decorated career officers in the military. Our hopes and prayers are with them. Thank you.

Golden walks off. The REPORTERS CLAMOR:

REPORTERS

(UNISON)

Director Golden! DIRECTOR GOLDEN!

BACKSTAGE - Golden approaches Collinswood.

COLLINSWOOD

Golden, your drillers better not let us down.

GOLDEN

We'll do your best.

EXT. SPACE - APPROACHING THE MOON

The two Shuttles approach THE MOON, Freedom in the lead, Independence following.

Beyond the Moon, too distant to see clearly, THE ASTEROID is on its trajectory toward Earth.

It is a HUGE, GRAGGY MASS surrounded on all sides by a DEBRIS CLUSTER of rock and ice, the ice glinting on and off in reflected sunlight, like millions of fireflies.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

WATTS  
(unbelieving)  
My goodness, look at that thing....

SHARP  
We have visual of target, Houston.  
Velocity thirty-three hundred miles  
an hour.

INT. HOUSTON - MISSION CONTROL

Clark sits with Techs Flip and Skip. Golden and Temple pace behind the console.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - REAR CABIN

Harry, Chick, Bear, and Max finish buckling into their seat restraints and harnesses.

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE - REAR CABIN

A.J., Lev, Bennie, Jimbo and Tito buckle on harnesses. Bennie looks at A.J. nervously.

EXT. SPACE - APPROACHING THE MOON

The Shuttles rapidly close on the moon. The dead, luminous sphere looms larger in frame.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

THE LUNAR SURFACE completely fills the cockpit windshield. We've lost sight of the oncoming asteroid.

SHARP  
Visual contact with target lost,  
Houston.

IN THE REAR CABIN - Harry, Chick, Bear, and Max stare in awe at the ever-approaching Moon.

EXT. SPACE - APPRAOCHING THE MOON

Shuttles Freedom and Independence shoot toward the Moon, pulled by the lunar gravitational field.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD - THE LUNAR SURFACE is only 150 miles down, looking close enough to reach down and touch.

EXT. SPACE - APPROACHING THE MOON

The two Shuttles whip into lunar orbit, moving around the Moon, continuing to accelerate, nearing its Dark side.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

CLARK  
(into headset)  
How we doin', Freedom, over?

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

WATTS  
Nearing the Dark Side, Houston, a  
minute thirty and counting.

EXT. SPACE - THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON

On the Moon's opposite side, THE ASTEROID roars into frame, its trailing fragments motionless in relation to each other, travelling as a swarm, a cluster of debris. As it nears the Moon's gravitational field --

TRAILING FRAGMENTS peel away, drawn into the Moon by its lunar gravity. A relatively DEBRIS-LESS CORRIDOR begins to form on one side of the asteroid.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

SKIP  
Twenty seconds till we lose radio  
contact, Director.

CLARK  
You're on your own, Willie. You've  
got to raise your velocity 17 thousand  
miles an hour or you won't catch the  
target, over.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

SHARP  
See you on the other side, Houston.

SKIP (V.O.)  
Entering Dark Side, Freedom, and  
counting: ten, nine, eight, seven...

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Skip : Radio contact terminated.

The radio crackles with STATIC. ON THE TECHNICIAN'S CONSOLES, all of Freedom's and Independence's COMPUTERIZED SYSTEM MONITORS (pressurization, oxygen, electrical power, fuel capacity, etc.) GO DEAD.

GOLDEN  
They'll be pullin' nine and half G's  
for eleven minutes, General.

TEMPLE  
Anyone done that before?

FLIP  
Yeah. That Russian monkey in 1957.

CLARK  
We'll pick 'em up again in sixteen  
minutes, Danny.

GOLDEN  
If they're still alive.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - AROUND DARK SIDE OF MOON

The radio is STATIC.

WATTS  
Rockets ready for burn, Willie.

SHARP  
(over shoulder to  
Harry and others)  
Time to suck it up, people. Just  
pretend you're on the big roller  
coaster at Disneyland...(mumbles  
under breath) ...times a hundred....

Sharp reaches for the BOOSTER ROCKET SWITCH. He gives Watts  
one last look, then throws the switch.

EXT. DARK SIDE OF THE MOON - FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE

Freedom and Independence fire their BOOSTERS. The two SHUTTLES  
explode forward, hurtling around the Moon's DARK SIDE with a  
degree of increasing velocity never before experienced by  
man.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - REAR CABIN

Harry, Chick, Bear, and Max get hit with the first G-Forces.  
Their torsos press back against their seats. They flex their  
arms, breathing deeply, expanding their chest cavities as  
they were taught in training.

HARRY  
I hate to fly, I hate to fly, I hate  
to fly....

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE - REAR CABIN

A.J., Lev, Bennie, Jumbo, and Tito get slammed back by the  
first wave of G-Forces.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

Watts reads her VELOCITY INDICATOR under G-Forces so bad she speaks through clenched teeth:

WATTS  
Fourteen thousand...sixteen  
thousand...twenty thousand miles an  
hour, Willie...!

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Silence. Tension. Technicians stare at their consoles.

CLARK  
They're hittin' the big G's right  
about...now.

GOLDEN  
Come on, Willie, you can do this....

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - REAR CABIN

Excruciating, gut-wrenching, turn-your-intestines-inside-out G-Forces.

HARRY and CHICK'S FACIAL MUSCLES distort hideously; their rubbery cheeks and lips flatten out. They continue anti-G exercises, tensing every muscle, trying to keep blood flow evenly distributed.

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE

A.J. and Bennie's distorted faces, likewise, go through the anti G-Force exercises, tensing every muscle.

EXT. LUNAR ORBIT - MASTER SHOT

IN ONE AWE-INSPIRING SHOT, we see --

Shuttles Freedom and Independence rocketing around the Moon in darkness, further and further, until finally WE SEE, increasingly, a staggering, mind blowing visual --

THE ASTEROID'S TRAILING DEBRIS appears, a HUGE CLOUD of tiny ICE CHUNKS AND PEBBLES, and much larger BOULDERS, and ICEBERGS the size of houses, the ice glinting with reflected sunlight, throwing off a dazzling SPECTRAL SHOWER OF LIGHT in all directions, and finally --

THE ASTEROID'S HUGE CORE - it has just cleared the Moon and now flies straight for it's destination - the cool, blue PLANET EARTH dead ahead across an expanse of space.

Shuttles Freedom and Independence slingshot out of the Lunar orbit and fall in behind the asteroid, settling into the DEBRIS-LESS CORRIDOR.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Continued STATIC on the radio. Everyone sits nervously waiting. Suddenly the shuttles' computerised SYSTEM MONITORS begin to click back on.

CLARK

Freedom, come in, over. Independence,  
come in, over.

Nothing. Golden grabs the mike.

GOLDEN

Willie? Come in, over. Willie, can  
you hear me...?

Total silence. A pin could drop. The N.A.S.A. Technicians stare nervously at the Central Board.

Then, suddenly through static:

SHARP (V.O.)

Houston, you gotta see this to believe  
it....

Elation. Held breaths are exhaled. Golden and N.A.S.A. TECHNICIANS smile.

No one is more relieved than Grace.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

Sharp and Watts stare through the windshield at --

THE ASTEROID, below them and dead ahead. We get our first (and only temporary) clear glimpse of the designated landing field, a relatively smooth, unobstructed plane on the asteroid's surface.

Harry is green, looks like he's gonna blow chunks.

SHARP

We're awake, we're not pukin'....  
(looks over shoulder  
at Harry)  
...well, Harry is. And we got a  
clear path to the target. Houston,  
over.

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE

Truman smiles.

TRUMAN

Copy that, Freedom.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Clark gives Golden a thumbs up.

CLARK  
We'll take you in, guys.

EXT. SHUTTLES FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE

Freedom, in the lead, and Independence, following to the rear and side, descend through the debris-less corridor to the waiting asteroid.

Suddenly a CLOUD OF ICE AND PEBBLES wafts in front of the Shuttles.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM COCKPIT

In one terrifying second, visibility is cut to twenty feet. Then BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

PEBBLES and SMALL ICE CHUNKS strike the windshield, chipping and denting it. The impacts are violent; the interior is buffeted around. It's the space equivalent of bad hailstorm.

SHARP  
Damn it....!

CLARK (V.O.)  
What is it, Willie?

SHARP  
Problem, Houston. We've got debris  
all over us!

REAR OF COCKPIT - Harry and the others, alarmed, are buffeted around violently.

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE - COCKPIT

No visibility here either. Ice chunks and pebbles BANG against the windshield.

TRUMAN  
I've got no visibility. I've lost  
orientation to the target!

Suddenly, as sudden as it came, the debris clears.

But a HUGE ICE BOULDER the size of a three-story building twirls into Independence's path. It hits a BOULDER which collides with another.

TRUMAN  
Big guy! Dead ahead!

Truman stabs his directional thruster button. Shuttle Independence veers to the right....

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Sharp hits his directional thruster, and Freedom veers to the left....

EXT. THROUGH THE ASTEROID'S TAIL

Freedom goes left, Independence right, splitting the ice boulder.

Freedom clears the ice boulder by a foot. Independence, not so lucky, clips the ice boulder, ripping her left thruster clean off. With one thruster, Independence careens out of control, twirling and spinning.

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE

TRUMAN

((panicked))

I lost left thruster! No control! I have no control!

In the Independence's cargo bay, one of the Armadillos RIPS free from its moorings and plunges through the CARGO BAY DOORS.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Sharp steers Freedom past the ice boulder.

WATTS

Where's the other ship....?!

Suddenly the Independence, with a RIPPED OPEN CARGO BAY DOOR, careens directly across Freedom's path, filling Freedom's cockpit window, nearly colliding with her.

Sharp hits his thrusters, veering away from the damaged Independence.

Sharp and Watts watch Independence twirling toward the asteroid. Suddenly

BANG!!!

The INDEPENDENCE'S ERRANT ARMADILLO strikes the Freedom's nose, spider-webbing the WINDSHIELD. Sharp and Watts recoil in terror. Watts SCREAMS.

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE

The fuselage is spinning. A.J., Bennie and the others are in terror. In the cockpit, Truman SCREAMS over the radio:



...

TRUMAN  
Houston, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, we're going  
down!

The Shuttle's roof collides with a rock. We hear SCRAPING METAL. The CEILING dents in, dislodging INTERIOR CEILING PANELS filled with wires and electrical components; they rain down on A.J. and the others.

Choas. The SPARKING CABIN fills with smoke.

TRUMAN  
Crew, go to life support!

Everyone grabs for their HELMET, frantically trying to get them on. A.J. gets his on, but he can't lock his neck seal. He fidgets with the little SEAKL LOCKS.

A.J. rips off the helmet. It slips from his fingers and floats off through the zero-g cabin!

A.J.  
Goddamn it!

A.J. throws off his seat harnesses and goes after his helmet. In zero-gravity, the sides of the twirling cockpit revolve around A.J. as he moves.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

We hear a CACOPHONY OF VOICES and BANGING ROCKS against Independence's fuselage.

TRUMAN  
MAYDAY, HOUSTON, MAYDAY....!!

Golden and the N.A.S.A. personnel can only sit and listen, horrified, impotent to do anything.....

INT. SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE - REAR CABIN

AT THE BACK OF THE CABIN - A.J. reaches his helmet and frantically gets it back on. The fuselage is still twirling around him.

Bennie, strapped in and freaking out, throws off his seat harness and bolts for the SAFETY EMERGENCY HATCH equipped with EXPLOSIVE RELEASE CHARGES.

Truman sees Bennie at the Emergency Hatch. BIG ROCKS smash off the windshield in front of Truman; the windshield's safety glass is weakened, splintered, to the point of bursting.

TRUMAN  
Get away from that door!!!!

Bennie is wild-eyed, crazed.

---

BENNIE  
Go to hell, man, I ain't dyin' on  
this thing!!!!

SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

A ROCK SMASHES through the windshield, gouging into Truman. Depressurisation. Truman and Co-pilot Weston are sucked out through the windshield.

Bennie BLOWS the Emergency Hatch's explosive charges. The hatch door pulls Bennie out into space...to his death.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

FLASH CUTS: Independence's System Monitors flash off: PRESSURIZATION goes to zero; CABIN OXYGEN goes to zero; INDIVIDUAL LIFE SUPPORT MONITORS go to zero.

Independence's radio transmissions are STATIC and PANICKED VOICES. Golden runs down the aisle to Independence's monitors.

SKIP  
No cabin pressure! Systems-wide  
failure!

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - REAR CABIN

Harry and the Roughnecks are SMASHED around in their seats.

IN THE COCKPIT - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

A BOULDER the size of a house looms downslope. Shuttle Freedom is skidding straight for it.

Sharp and Watts watch helplessly as the Shuttle skids toward the boulder.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE

Freedom hits a SMALLER ROCK, which changes its skid angle. It clears the boulder by a foot and skids to a stop at the base of the slope.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - REAR CABIN

Harry and the others JOLT to a stop. No one moves. No one breathes. It's scary as hell.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Golden and the other Technicians wait breathlessly for some response. Golden GRABS the mike.

GOLDEN  
Freedom. come in.  
(MORE)

---

GOLDEN (CONT'D)

(no response)

Independence, come in.

(no response)

Come in, Freedom.

Nothing. Skip buries his face in his hands. Flip chews his pencil. Golden, having lost one crew already, twists his wedding ring.

SHARP (V.O.)

Houston, it's Freedom. We just landed  
on this son-of-a-bitch, over.

Golden and the Technicians breath a sigh of relief.

WATTS (V.O.)

What's the status of Independence?

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - REAR CABIN

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON HARRY, as he waits for Houston's response to this last question.

SHARP (V.O.)

We lost her.

CAMERA TIGHT ON HARRY. He's lost men before, many men on oil rigs. But not A.J.....

CHICK (O.S.)

Harry, Harry, Jesus Christ, this  
can't happen....

Harry snaps out of it, turns to Chick.

HARRY

It did happen. They're gone. Deal  
with it. We got a lot of work to do.

Harry unharnesses himself and rises.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Golden looks at Grace. She looks back. A tear slides off her cheek to the console. Harry's daughter doesn't say a word, or break down. She just quietly rises and walks to the back of the room. Grace rubs her bare ring finger. A BEAT.

CAMERA SPIES the ZERO BARRIER CLOCK. Seven hours, 52 minutes, 000 feet drilled.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Chick, Bear, and Max prepare to disembark, donning helmet and glove assemblies, clicking neck and wrist seals into locking position.

---

Harry comes into the cockpit. Watts is flipping switches and reading gauges. Sharp's on the radio. A haze fills the cockpit.

WATTS  
Engine ignition system isn't  
responding.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

INTERCUT - FREEDOM/ MISSION CONTROL

GOLDEN  
What's the problem?

FLIP  
Engine ignition. Starting diagnostics.

SHARP  
Houston, I don't know where we are.  
Tell me how far we overshot Harry's  
sweep spot. Advise on currant  
location, over.

Skip motions to Golden and Clark. They hurry over to his console. On Skip's computer screen is a MAP OF THE ASTEROID containing its geological fault lines.

SKIP  
They overshot their landing 26 miles.  
There's a different fault line, but  
it's deeper.

GOLDEN  
How much deeper?

SKIP  
Two hundred feet.

Golden exchanges a look with Temple.

GOLDEN  
Harry, your fault line's fifty yards  
off the starboard side.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Harry stalks to the rear.

HARRY  
Rockhound.

ROCKHOUND  
Yes, sir.

HARRY

I'm gonna get you some surface samples  
and you're gonna tell me what I'm up  
against.

ROCKHOUND

Rocks are my life.

WATTS

Willie, we might be stuck.

Sharp exchanges grim looks with Pitts and Fisk over this bad  
information.

HARRY

The good news just keeps comin'.  
Load up, guys.

Sharp watches Harry and the guys exit to the rear.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Freedom's cargo door opens; its RAMP unfolds to the asteroid's  
surface.

HARRY looks out.

Freedom is in a small, cold, dark valley. The asteroid's  
face is tilted away from the Earth and Sun. THE MOON is huge  
on our rear horizon. The place is eerily calm and tranquil.  
Harry walks down the ramp onto the asteroid surface.

INT. FREEDOM CARGO BAY - INSIDE ARMADILLO

Chick, at the Armadillo's controls, engages gears.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

The Armadillo rumbles out of the cargo bay, carrying Bear,  
Max, Rockhound and Pitts over the wheel wells.

The Armadillo drives 50 yards from Freedom and parks. The  
guys hop down, turning on their PRO-GRAVITY THRUSTERS. Bear  
begins off-loading 20-foot long DRILLING PIPES.

Harry takes readings from a SEISMIC INSTRUMENT. Pulls out a  
SOIL SAMPLER, a small shovel on a telescoping shaft. He digs  
it in with his boot. Clang. It doesn't dig in at all. He  
walks around, stabbing it into the ground. CLANG. CLANG.

Chick exchanges nervous looks with Bear and Max.

HARRY

Bedrock. Whole goddamn place is  
Bedrock.

---

Harry examines the ground. Not satisfied. He finds a spot he likes; digs an "X" in the soil with his boot.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Here. Fire up the Bad Boy bit.

Chick, Max and Bear go into action. Max screws the Bad Boy bit onto the first drilling pipe. Bear hoists the pipe up to the DRILLING MECHANISM, muscles it onto the DRILL DRIVE, then clamps it on.

Harry plugs a TEE and GOLF BALL into the craggy surface. He waggles his club, a 5-IRON HEAD, screwed onto the soil sampler's shaft.

PITTS

What's he doing?

CHICK

Wildcatters are superstitious, Colonel. Harry does this every time we break ground.

He swings....WHACK! The ball rockets off the tee and keeps going...and going...

HARRY

HOLE NUMBER 77. Let 'er rip!

Chick throws a lever, lowering the BAD BOY BIT into the rocky, icy surface.

Down the drill pipe goes, unimpeded, 10 feet just like that. It suddenly stops. It's turning, but not drilling. Bear and Max approach the drill hole.

BEAR

What in hell's down there?

HARRY

Chick, bring 'er up!

Chick throws it in reverse. The DRILLING ARM reverses out of the hole. The Bad Boy bot comes up CHEWED TO SHREDS. Harry and the guys examine the drill bit. Everyone exchanges a worried look.

MAX

The dream. It's my dream.

HARRY

Shut up, Max.

(looks at Bear)

What's with the look? Get that off your face. You've seen bits get eaten before.

BEAR  
Not after ten feet.

CHICK  
The first ten better be the worst  
ten.

HARRY  
Go to the Terminator.

Chick grabs Harry's mysterious METAL CASE. Harry pops open the metal case, revealing THE TERMINATOR, a super high-tech bit.

HARRY  
I designed you. I built you. You are  
the enemy of all subterranean shit.  
You are the king. It's showtime.

Harry passes it to Bear, who screws it onto the drilling pipe, Rockhound scoops up a COLLECTION OF DOWNHOLE ROCK CHIPS.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Hit it, Chick.

The DRILL PIPE turns. Sediment comes WHOOSHING out of the hole and -- THE DRILL PIPE descends like a bitch.

INT. FREEDOM

Sharp, Watts, Pitts and Fisk have a PANEL removed, exposing the guts of Freedom's wiring and components. Watts and Sharp are inside the panel, scrunched against the fuselage wall, unbolting a large COMPONENT. Watts hands Pitts and Fisk a SMALLER COMPONENT.

WATTS  
Unbolt the housing. There and there.

INT. ARMADILLO

The rock CHIPS spew into the COLLECTOR in front of ROCKHOUND. Harry looks on.

HARRY  
What do you make of that?

Rockhound picks up several chips. Draws them close to his eyes.

ROCKHOUND  
Oh my. Oh my, my, my. This isn't  
rock. It's uhh, it's uhh,  
it's.....iron.

HARRY  
Iron deposit?

ROCKHOUND

(shakes head)

No. It's been melted. Forged rather. I've only seen this once - at a volcano in Hawaii.

(looks up at Harry)

You're drilling into a big slab of cast-iron, Mr. Stamper.

INT. FREEDOM

Harry picks up the radio.

HARRY

Give me Dan Golden.

INTERCUT - MISSION CONTROL / FREEDOM

Golden's handed the phone.

GOLDEN

Yeah, Harry. What's your situation?

INTERCUT - GOLDEN AND TEMPLE IN MISSION CONTROL / HARRY ON FREEDOM

HARRY

Situation? You put me down on the worst possible place on this asteroid. I'm drillin' into something I shouldn't. The hole just ate one of my diamond-tipped bits in thirty minutes. That has never happened to me in twenty years.

GOLDEN

You're forty minutes in. You should be down 150 feet. How far are you?

HARRY

Not far.

(beat)

Twenty-three feet.

CLOSE ON Golden as he looks at Temple.

TEMPLE

This is an exercise in futility.

GOLDEN

(to Harry)

"Don't tell me what you can't do, tell me what you can." Remember that, Stamper? Go faster.

HARRY

We will.



GOLDEN

How?

INT. FREEDOM CARGO BAY

Sharp and Pitts enter. Fisk hands Sharp the phone.

SHARP

Sharp, over.

PUSH IN on Sharp in EXTREME CLOSE-UP. His jaw tightens. His eyes dart.

SHARP (CONT'D)

Sir, the bird can't fly.

TEMPLE (V.O.)

Well, you need to get it fixed unless you want to die along with that asteroid.

A LONG PAUSE, as Sharp listens.

SHARP (CONT'D)

Yes, sir.

TEMPLE : (V.O.)

And I don't want those drillers knowing about this. They have enough to worry about just drilling the damn hole.

COLLINSWOOD (V.O.)

Colonel Sharp, this is Chief of Staff Collinswood. Have Pitts and Fisk prepare to detonate that nuke on the surface. Too many lives are at stake here. Have them standing by.

SHARP

On your order sir.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - A TINY VALLEY - ESTABLISHING

The gnarled WRECK OF SHUTTLE INDEPENDENCE lies below. Twisted metal and cabin materials strewn everywhere.

INT. INDEPENDENCE CRASH SITE

CAMERA moves through the wreckage of Independence. Nightmarish. EMERGENCY LIGHTS still on battery flicker. The shattered windshield; the blown emergency hatch; A CORPSE lies face down, helmet half on, half off; Independence's huge tubular NUCLEAR DEVICE.

---

Something moves on the ceiling. REVEAL A.J. hanging upside down, caught in the twisted fuselage skin. A.J. cuts himself down. He twirls to the ground.

Sees LEGS MOVING UNDER RUBBLE.

A.J. throws off the rubble, revealing Lev, dazed but alive. A.J. helps him to his feet.

LEV  
What happened to the others....

A.J. and Lev move toward the cockpit.

A.J.  
(grabs the radio)  
Freedom, come in, over. Freedom,  
come in, over....  
Freedom...?  
(shaking head)  
It's you and me.

A.J. smashes the radio in frustration.

EXT. FREEDOM - DRILLING SITE

Chick and Bear screw on a new length of drill pipe. Chick engages the gears. The drill pipe descends. THE TERMINATOR is working. Harry approaches from the shuttle.

HARRY  
How far?

CHICK  
Almost 60 feet and startin' to kick  
ass!

Suddenly GRRRR. CLANG. BANG. The drill pipe stops. Harry walks over to the hole.

CHICK (CONT'D)  
That did not sound good.

HARRY  
Increase r.p.m.

Chick throws the lever. The drill pipe turns faster, but still doesn't descend. Harry and the guys crowd around the drilling hole.

MAX  
Freaky, man.

BEAR  
I got one of those big-time crappy  
feelings about this.

HARRY  
We gotta get more power down to this bit.

(thinks; looks up at  
Chick)  
Full throttle.

CHICK  
You sure?

HARRY  
Yeah, I'm sure.

CHICK  
I don't think she can take it.

HARRY  
She's gonna have to.

CHICK  
The last time we ran her at full throttle we ripped her up!

HARRY  
I don't have time to argue, Chick, now goddamn it, throttle up, or I'll come up there and do it for you.

Chick reluctantly throws the lever to FULL THROTTLE. The TURBINE ENGINE ROARS. The DRILL PIPE turns faster in the hole. The TURBINE ENGINE is shaking the Armadillo. The drill pipe is descending again. Suddenly BANG!!

The CLUTCH ruptures, spewing the CLUTCH PLATES and GEARS into space.

HARRY  
Stop!

Chick throws it into reverse. Up comes THE TERMINATOR, CHEWED TO SHREDS.

Bear and Max look at it, then each other. Very worried now.

BEAR  
The Terminator's terminated.

CHICK  
The clutch is dead.

HARRY  
We're goin' to the second rig.

Harry stalks off toward the Shuttle.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
We need the second Armadillo.

---

SHARP  
We'll bring it out to you.

Harry moves to get his pipe tongs. Fisk and Pitts are next to the uncovered nuclear bomb. Harry looks at the bomb.

EXT. FREEDOM - DRILL SITE

Chick, Bear and Max listen to Harry over the inter-crew link.

INTERCUT WITH ABOVE.

INT. FREEDOM

HARRY  
Why don't we cut to the chase,  
fellahs? What the fuck is going on  
with that other nuke?

Harry stares at the nuclear weapon.

SHARP  
Stamper, if you can't drill the hole,  
we're detonating this thing on the  
surface....

Chick and the guys eye each other. Harry walks off, pissed off....

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Golden and Clark are hunched over monitors. Two MILITARY AIDES carrying a NUCLEAR COMMAND LINK (FOOTBALL) SUITCASE.

Golden, alarmed, tries to figure out what they have.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Chick, Bear and Max enter through the airlock. Everyone turns and stares at Sharp.

SHARP  
There's no way in hell you're gonna  
get that hole dug, and you know it.

HARRY  
Well, it wasn't my scientists that  
told me about the fucking fire cracker  
inside the hand story. Are we  
detonating on the surface or are we  
gonna drill?

BEAR  
I didn't come up here to die.

CHICK  
I say we drill. They say we have  
until Zero Barrier.

SHARP  
(freaked out)  
That hole better be dug in two hours,  
or we're detonating. Whether you're  
on this godforsaken rock or not!

HARRY  
We're drilling.

Harry and his crew file out.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

GOLDEN  
(to Temple)  
What is going on up there?

TEMPLE  
Your drillers aren't doing the job,  
Dan.

GOLDEN  
After 15 minutes? What do you expect?

TEMPLE  
Golden, we are preparing for surface  
detonation.

GOLDEN  
A surface detonation isn't going to  
do it, General. My scientists have  
already told you that. It must be  
detonated inside the asteroid. The  
alternative is that the Earth will  
be bombarded by smaller matter which  
will be just as catastrophic.

Temple stares off pensively into the sky.

TEMPLE  
We have a lot better chance of  
surviving the "smaller matter." The  
drillers have two hours  
(to the Aides)  
I want you ready on my command.

The Adjutants prepare the nuclear command link.

MILITARY ADJUTANT  
Sir, we have interface with the  
weapon. Remote detonator standing  
by.

INT. INDEPENDENCE - CRASH SITE

Lev is sitting on the ground, head in his hands, completely demoralised.

LEV

I feel like Skywalker Luke when he learned Darth Vader his father. What I should do?

A.J.

Get up, we got work to do.

LEV

A.J., let me cash in my chips.

A.J.

Lev, we're getting off this rock, if I have to drag your ass the whole way.

(off Lev's look)

Now get up!

A.J. walks into the Independence cargo bay, detached from the nose section.

Then climbs into Independence's Armadillo.

A.J.

C'MON LEV, PUT YOUR WEIGHT INTO IT!

EXT. INDEPENDENCE - WRECKAGE OF CARGO BAY

Lev is prying open the cargo bay ramp door (the hydraulics are shot).

LEV

YOU COME PUSH, YANKEE....

INT. - MISSION CONTROL

Golden turns to Temple.

GOLDEN

The asteroid's surface is heating up.

TEMPLE

What does that mean?

GOLDEN

It means they may not be able to work on the surface for much longer. The temperatures will be unbearable.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE - WRECKAGE OF CARGO BAY

The Armadillo, engine rumbling, is poised to roll Independence's long tubular NUCLEAR WEAPON which has been ejected with other debris from the broken fuselage.

LEV

Wait A.J.! We drive over nuclear weapon and we finished before we started.

A.J.

So move it.

Lev jams a pipe between the ARMING DEVIC and the nuke. As he rolls the nuke over, the arming device detaches, rips off, and clatters to the ground.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

TEMPLE

Golden, tell your drillers the clock is ticking. I have 6 billion people down here relying on them!

In the b.d. hangs a crayon drawing of sunny day by Temple's daughter.

TEMPLE (CONT'D)

A lot of people are die....

INT. INDEPENDENCE - CRASH SITE

The ARMADILLO blasts through the cargo bay door. A.J. and Lev roll off away from the Independence.

A.J. cranes his neck looking out through the Armadillo. A RIDGE with THREE TALL SPIRES is in the distance, ringed with LIGHT from Freedom's FLOOD LIGHTS.

A half-smile from A.J: hope.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Sharp comes back from the cockpit, carrying the detonator. Harry's on the phone to Golden.

HARRY

...You told me that the only way to deal with this hunk 'o crud is to get a nuke 1000 feet down. You sticking with that?

GOLDEN (V.O.)

Firmly.

HARRY

Great. Glad we have that understanding.

GOLDEN (V.O.)

If we're gonna pull this off, we have to have a little talk about time...and temperature. Zero Barrier's in two hours.

HARRY

Wait...wait..what about temperature? When did temperatures come into the picture?

GOLDEN (V.O.)

Harry, your suits are good upto 150 degrees Celsius....

HARRY

And...? How hot is it going to get?

GOLDEN (V.O.)

We didn't anticipate you being on the asteroid so long. The clock is ticking...

HARRY

How hot is it going to get?!

GOLDEN (V.O.)

Three hundred and fifty degrees.

Harry's face drops.

HARRY

Thanks for telling us now, Golden....I don't think my bits can handle those kind of temperatures....

INT. FREEDOM - CARGO BAY

Harry clicks off the radio.

WATTS

We've still gotta fix this shuttle, Stamper.

HARRY

Give me some more good news. You've got two new assistants who can fix your shuttle. Bear, Max, hop to it. There's not a machine they can't fix. We can handle the hole from here.



EXT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

The airlock opens. Sharp and Pitts are led out by Harry.

HARRY

Colonel Sharp, if we're going to  
blow this hole, you gotta help ME.  
I need some more manpower....

EXT. FREEDOM DRILL SITE - MINUTES LATER

The SECOND ARMADILLO rumbles out of Freedom's cargo bay. Chick and the Roughnecks work like a NASCAR pit crew. Sharp and Pitts lay on their backs holding down a 1000 pound axle, fighting zero-g.

Suddenly, the ground begins to tremble.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - FRONT OF "THREE SPIRES RIDGE"

A.J.'s ARMADILLO rumbles over a little hill revealing the RIDGE WITH THREE SPIRES directly in front of them. THE SUN is moving over the asteroid's FAR HORIZON, causing a "sunrise." It is breathtaking, spiritual...and frighteningly bright.

INT. A.J.'S ARMADILLO

A.J.

Over the hill.

Suddenly, the ground under the vehicle shakes sharply. A.J. stops the Armadillo.

The ground around the vehicle heaves up and down. The GROUND SPLITS. One TECTONIC PLATE rises 15 feet in the air. The ground breaks like a wave, up and down.

INT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Here, too, the ground shakes. Bear, terrified, drops a DRILL PIPE. Max is shaken to the ground.

Chick is nearly thrown off the Armadillo.

CHICK

Clear the rig!!!

Chick jumps down, bouncing. Everybody gets the hell away from the drilling hole.

INT. A.J.'S ARMADILLO

The asteroid shakes violently, throwing A.J. and Lev around the cab. ROCKS BANK down on the Armadillo's top and hood. The ASTEROID SURFACE continues splitting apart across the slope's fall line.

A.J.

EARTHQUAKE!

The asteroid RUMBLES a few more seconds, then the quake slowly stops. All is still.

A.J. (CONT'D)

Let's take a look.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE

Lev gets out; he nervously paces back and forth across the lip of the fissure.

LEV

This bad.  
(repeating, mantra)  
Darth Vader. Darth Vader.

A.J.

Listen, Mr. Negative. Everyone thinks we're dead. We're not. So, suck it up. Because if we don't drill that hole, six billion people are going to die. And I'm not lettin' Harry Stamper get all the freaking credit for saving the world.

(firm)

We're gona do this, then we're going home.

LEV

I l-o-v-e this American confidence!  
Like John Wayne.  
(sotto)  
This why I suspect you won Cold War.

A.J.

Hep me get these rocks over there.

A.J. and Lev start dragging rocks to use as a "kicker ramp" for the jump.

Lev is oblivious. They pull embedded rock out, revealing DIAMONDS. A.J. holds up a large chunk.

A.J. (CONT'D)

This outta cut into a sweet wedding ring.

LEV

(holding chunk)  
With this I can rebuild my MIR.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Chick, Bear, and Max cautiously approach the drill hole. Everything seems okay. Chick climbs back up to the drill-drive platform.

CHICK

Back to work!

Bear grabs the drill pipe and hoists it: back to work.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - "THREE SPIRES RIDGE"

A.J. is walking along the GAPING, JAGGED FISSURE, 50 feet wide, 50 feet deep, stretching across the entire slope.

LEV

This bad, this very bad, very, very bad...

A.J.

Stick a cork in it, Lev. I'm tryin' to think.

A.J. stares at the fissure, his eyes roaming from the fissure...to the Armadillo...back to the fissure.

A.J. (CONT'D)

Hop on the back. Get our weight distributed better.

LEV

(uncertain)

And why to do this?

A.J.

Because I'm askin'. And turn your suit's thrusters off. Trust me, okay?

A.J. gets in the Armadillo. Lev goes around back, climbs on the REAR BUMPER. He clicks off his pressure suit's pro-gravity thrusters.

LEV

Okey-doke.

The Armadillo begins backing down the slope.

INT. A.J.'S ARMADILLO

A.J. throws it in neutral. The Armadillo stops.

A.J.

Hey, Lev, we're gonna see what this Porche engine can do....

He throws it in drive. The Armadillo lurches ahead.

EXT. A.J..'S ARMADILLO - BACK BUMPER

The Armadillo's REAR TIRES CHURN FORWARD, slinging rocks and gravel which, in zero-g, shoot off in a stream into space, never falling. Lev holds on for dear life.

A.J.'S Armadillo churns up the slope like a Bronco 4X4, slinging gravel, heading for THE JAGGED FISSURE. It FLIES over the fissure's edge as --

INT. A.J..'S ARMADILLO

-- A.J. punches the Armadillo's PRO-GRAVITY THRUSTER "OFF" SWITCH.

EXT. A.J..'S ARMADILLO - ROOF

-- the Armadillo's roof-mounted PRO-GRAVITY THRUSTERS shut down.

EXT. ASTEROID - "THREE SPIRES RIDGE" - JAGGED FISSURE

The Armadillo, no longer thrusting downwardly, flies across the jagged fissure in zero-g. The heavy steel vehicle doesn't fall. It ascends, and amazingly, shoots across the entire 50 foot expanse of jagged fissure.

EXT. A.J..'S ARMADILLO - BACK BUMPER

Lev looks down. The FISSURE passes beneath him, then SOLID GROUND again. They've cleared the fissure....but they're not coming down.

LEV

A.J., up is bad! Down!

INT. A.J..'S ARMADILLO

A.J. punches the PRO-GRAVITY THRUSTER "START" SWITCH. Nothing....

EXT. A.J..'S ARMADILLO - BACK BUMPER

The thruster nozzles SPUTTER, but no thrust. The Armadillo is 50 feet off the ground and still ascending...into outer space. Lev, his next stop being Planet Mars, panics. He climbs the roof and peers inside the front windshield, POUNDING ON THE WINDSHIELD.

LEV

Down! Not up! Up is bad! Down!

INT. A.J..'S ARMADILLO

The Armadillo continues lifting into space, from which there is no return.

A.J. toggles the "start" switch. The switch's INDICATOR LIGHT FLICKERS.

A.J.  
HOLD ON, LEV, I GOT HER WORKIN'!!

EXT. A.J.'S ARMADILLO

Not quite. Only the right-front and right-rear THRUSTER NOZZLES fire, pushing the right side downward, rolling the Armadillo over on its side.

Lev, on the bumper, clings to the rear-mounted TOW WINCH AND CABLE ASSEMBLY.

Suspended in zero-g, on its side and in mid-air, the Armadillo is pushed by thrusters, tires-first, against the SHEER, 90 DEGREE CLIFF FACE next to the slope. All four Armadillo tires slam against the cliff. The Armadillo bounces off.

Lev, grabbing the Armadillo's TOWING CABLE, flies off the rear. The cable spools out and LEV, hanging on for all he's worth, SLAMS against the cliff face and descends....

INT. A.J.'S ARMADILLO

A.J., lying sideways, keeps toggling the thruster START SWITCH. The indicator light finally FLASHES "IN" and A.J. rams it into drive --

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - CLIFF FACE / ARMADILLO

-- the Armadillo, all four thrusters now working, drives sideways across the cliff face dragging Lev, who bounces against the cliff face and gradually falls, until he's bouncing on the asteroid surface.

The Armadillo finally falls down the cliff face and skids to a stop.

INT. A.J.'S ARMADILLO

A.J., shaken, takes a deep breath and gets out.

EXT. A.J.'S ARMADILLO - REAR

A.J. walks to the rear. Lev splayed out 50 feet from the back of the Armadillo, covered in asteroid surface dirt and grime, looks up at him.

LEV  
Very bad idea, A.J.

EXT. FREEDOM - DRILLING SITE

Harry orders his crew to start the drill up. The men drill a shitload of feet in record time. They finally burst through the rock and hit easy sediment.

The asteroid is spinning toward sunlight. Here, too, there is a sunrise. Bear's face sweats inside the helmet. Chick's vision begins to blur. Tito takes a seat on a nearby rock, exhausted.

CHICK

Mutha...it's getting warm.

BEAR

(worried)

We got that sunrise, Harry. These bits are gonna fry up.....

Suddenly the TRANSMISSION LINKAGE in the Armadillo BLOWS.

HARRY

Goddamn it!

(thinks)

We'll take the tranny from the other rig! And if you wanna complain about the heat, go to some other fucking asteroid....Toughen up.

SHARP

(to Roughnecks)

Let's move it.....let's go, guys.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Chick and Bear yank the detached good TRANSMISSION HOUSING from inside Armadillo 2 and carry it across to Armadillo 1.

INT. ARMADILLO 1 - CABIN

Max finishes unbolting the BROKEN TRANSMISSION HOUSING. He passes it to Chick who dumps it on the surface. Sharp and Truman work with Bear and Chick who feed in the good transmission housing.

Max presses the airlock. The doors close and the cabin pressurises. Max clicks off his helmet. He begins installing the transmission housing and the linkage.

EXT. ARMADILLO

Chick and Bear, atop the drilling platform, begin installing the clutch plates and transmission linkage.

HARRY

Move guys, move it.....

Bolting, bolting, bolting, connecting, connecting.....

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Skip is analysing the asteroid's THERMAL READINGS. A MULTI-COLORED THERMAL IMAGE MAP shows most of the asteroid is GREEN (no heat), but around the chosen landing site are numerous RED SPOTS (heat).

SKIP

Look at these thermals. This is BEFORE  
sunlight hits the drill site. She's  
really heating up....

INT. ARMADILLO

Max is bolting. The DOWNHOLE PRESSURE GAUGE NEEDLE jolts.  
Max doesn't see it. He keeps working.

EXT. DRILLING SITE

Harry's watching the work. Out of the corner of his eye...  
THE DRILLING ARM KICKS. Harry turns to it. Nothing happens.  
His eyes move back to Chick and Bear, then back to the  
drilling arm. It kicks up again. Just a few inches.

HARRY

Chick. Unbolt the tranny.

CHICK

We just put it in.

HARRY

Do it. NOW.

Chick, confused, starts unbolting the tranny. Suddenly the  
well kicks hard, one foot high. Chick's jostled. BANG!! The  
RIG KICKS HARD, THREE FEET, bucking Chick off.

Chick scrambles back up to the drill platform.

The ground shakes. a terrific TREMBLER rumbles through the  
valley. Harry, Max and Bear cling to the side of the  
Armadillo. Chick's nearly thrown off.

HARRY (CONT'D)

GET THE TRANNY OUTTA THERE! WE LOSE  
THE TRANNY, WE'RE DEAD MEN!!

Harry climbs up to the DRILL PLATFORM. The GROUND SHAKES  
violently, throwing harry and Chick around the top of the  
drill platform.

HARRY

Max, you gotta get those bolts undone!

INT. ARMADILLO - REAR COMPARTMENT

Max is furiously unbolting the TRANNY HOUSING. There are two bolts to go.

He ratches one off....

MAX

I'm doin' it, I'm doin' it.

Max gets to the last bolt....

HARRY (V.O.)

Go Max, go Max, get the last bolt....!

Max gets the last bolt undone.

MAX

DONE!!

EXT. ARMADILLO - DRILL PLATFORM

Chick and Harry pull the unfastened TRANNY HOUSING out of the Armadillo as --

INT. ARMADILLO - REAR COMPARTMENT

Max stares at the DOWNHOLE PRESSURE GAUGES, groping through the compartment for his helmet.

MAX

Pressure's through the roof! Shit, where's my helmet...!?

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Suddenly the DRILLING ARM jolts upward, lifting the ARMADILLO SIX FEET off the ground.

CHICK

She's gonna blow!

HARRY

MAX, GET THE HELL OUT OF THERE!!!

INT. ARMADILLO - REAR COMPARTMENT

Max is thrown against a wall of the rear compartment.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

The DRILLING ARM KICKS again, six feet this time, tossing the Armadillo over on two wheels.



INT. ARMADILLO - REAR COMPARTMENT

Max is SLAMMED against the wall again. Terrified, he grabs for his helmet and locks the NECK SEALS.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

A DEEP RUMBLING emanates from the drilling hole, coming seemingly from the ASTEROID'S CORE. Harry gets to his feet and SLAMS HIS FIST against the Armadillo's SIDE.

HARRY  
CLEAR THE RIG!

Everyone scatters....

INT. ARMADILLO - REAR COMPARTMENT

Max, helmet on, is frantically scrambling to the airlock, but there's no time...

MAX  
I CAN'T DEPRESSURIZE!!

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

With an awesome force, the DRILLING HOLE BLOWS. The DRILLING PIPE EXPLODES upward, lifting the DRILLING ARM and the ENTIRE ARMADILLO VEHICLE with it.

THE ENTIRE RIG blows upward into space.

INT. ARMADILLO - REAR COMPARTMENT

Max punches the DOOR LOCK without depressurising the cabin and is sucked violently out of the rear compartment into open space.

EXT. SPACE OVER ASTEROID SURFACE

FIFTY FEET OF DRILL PIPE, THE DRILLING ARM, and the entire ARMADILLO RIG with MAX trailing, BLOWS into space. MAX'S FACE is a screaming mask of terror and confusion, reaching out, but there's no one to catch him....Harry and the guys watch in helpless silence as the drill rig and Max ascend into space.

CHICK  
Max.....No. No. No.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Skip motions to Golden. He comes over.

SKIP  
They just lost the rig. The hole  
blew out.

Golden takes the news stoically. He thinks, looking across the room at Temple. He looks at the clock. ONE HOUR AND FORTY MINUTES TO GO.

GOLDEN

Say nothing.

EXT. FREEDOM - DRILLING SITE

Silence. A stark tableau. Harry and the men standing there, just watching.

Devastated, confused, in shock. This is a total catastrophe. The mission is over.

Sharp nods to Pitts. Pitts picks up the REMOTE NUCLEAR DETONATOR.

SHARP

Stamper, you ready to blow this?  
Let's get outta here...!

Harry ignores him. He won't accept defeat.

HARRY

Chick, get your butt over here.

Chick drags his ass over to Harry.

CHICK

Yeah.

HARRY

We're gonna fix this - make it work.  
If we weld those two together and go  
in one speed....

CHICK

Harry....

HARRY

Get your ass up here!

Chick doesn't move. The two men stare at each other.

CHICK

I've been with you fourteen years.  
I've never said this to you, never  
thought I would. It's over.

Chick walks off toward the shuttle. Bear joins him.

Harry, atop of the Armadillo, looks around. His head drops...he's burning up. His fist clenches the HALF MEDALLION in his hand (where is it - clipped to suit - in pouch of suit?) His eyes shut tightly. He is going to will victory from defeat. He will not give up.

CAMERA'S at low angle, giving Harry a larger-than-life look.

Harry hears something. A LOW RUMBLE. It is confusing. It sounds like.....an ARMADILLO ENGINE.

Harry opens his eyes. He slowly turns and looks --

ACROSS THE VALLEY - ON THE DISTANT RIDGE - The front bumper of A.J.'s Armadillo inches over the ridge crest.

HARRY, for the first time on the asteroid, smiles. Miracles do happen.

HARRY  
CHICK...BEAR!!!

Chick and Bear about ready to enter the Freedom's airlock, stop and turn.

They see A.J.'S ARMADILLO ROARING down the hillside onto the drilling site.

EXT. FREEDOM - DRILLING SITE

A.J. and Lev roar up to the drilling site in the Independence's Armadillo.

They come down a hill spectacularly without brakes and it piles into shit, knocking things down.

Lev and A.J. bounce up to Chick and Bear.....hugs and high-fives go around.

BEAR  
A.J. Frost. Back from the dead.

CHICK  
Now you can die with us.

HARRY  
All the bits are gone, A.J. I've been inventing drill bits for twenty-five years and I don't know what to use.

A.J.  
You wouldn't happen to need a diamond tipper, would you?

A.J. pulls out the POUCH OF DIAMONDS, found on the ridge.

HARRY  
Boys, we're back in business!

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Golden stares at the wall. Grace is curled up on a chair in the corner.

HARRY (V.O.)

We have good nes folks. A.J. and the Russian just showed up. No other survivors.

Grace shuts her eyes, smiling. Sobbing.

EXT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - AFTERNOON

Chick shuts off an ARC WELDER and moves aside, letting Harry view a DRILL BIT with A.J.'S DIAMONDS mounted on the top like diamonds in a ring setting. Harry and the guys smile.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

The NEWLY CREATED DRILL BIT lowers into the drilling hole and begins turning. It CHEWS into the shit down below, WHIRRING and RIPPING and.....descends quickly.

CHICK

It worked! She's goin' through her like a hot knife through butter!

BEGIN MONTAGE:

The men drill a shitload of feet in very little time. It is a feverish pace, their teamwork perfectly timed, as if choreographed.

QUICK CUTS:

--A.J. working the levers on the drill platform.

--Hydraulic tongs clamping, unclamping on pipe.

--Bear hoisting pipe.

--Chick and Bear waiting with connecting pipe.

--The drilling arm going up and down.

--Newly connected drill pipes descending into the hole.

--Harry watching, shouting orders.

--There are serious wind storms, giving Harry, A.J., and the other guys problems. So severe they knock guys across the asteroid.

END MONTAGE

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Skip looks at thermal readings with alarm.

SKIP

Dan, the surface is heating up!

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

HARRY

Time, A.J.

A.J.

One hour.

HARRY

Distance, Chick.

CHICK

Eight hundred and twenty feet, Harry.

HARRY

We gotta do 180 in thirty minutes.

CHICK

Downhole pressure's goin' through the roof!

HARRY

Stop! Shut down.

Chick throws the lever. The drill pipe stops turning.

A.J.

Harry, we can't stop.

HARRY

Got to, kid. No choice.

A.J.

Drill right through the pressure to pay dirt.

HARRY

That's crazy.

A.J.

Sometimes crazy works.

Harry and A.J. stare at each other.

HARRY

Chick, A.J.'s callin' this one.

-----

A.J.  
Full throttle!

Chick throws the lever. The DRILL PIPE descends on full throttle.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

All the TECHNICIANS stand, staring at the CENTRAL BOARD, where a graph shows the drilling progress.

FLIP  
Nine hundred and eighty...Nine  
ninety...they're into the fault,  
they're doing it.

Golden looks at the CLOCK. THIRTY-ONE MINUTES TO GO. He twists his wedding ring.

GOLDEN  
Now just get the thing in the hole.

All the TECHNICIANS stare at their monitors. The atmosphere is thick with tension. Clark chews his nails.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

The HOLE'S finished, the drill pipe's been pulled; A.J. drives the ARMADILLO safely away from the site.

Watts and Sharp roll a GURNEY containing the NUCLEAR DEVICE (a massive stainless steel tube) down Freedom's cargo bay RAMP toward the hole. Harry and all the Roughnecks stand by the HOLE.

HARRY  
One thousand feet.

CHICK  
(smiles)  
Thousand and three, Harry. With a  
half hour to spare.

Sharp and Watts roll the NUCLEAR DEVICE GURNEY past the Roughnecks up to the drilling hole.

HARRY  
Get the pipe and bit outta there.

Chick gets inside the Armadillo. Grabs the stick-shift. Compresses the clutch and throws it in reverse.

THE DRILL PIPE begins to reverse out of the hole.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

SKIP

She's gettin' hotter! Gotta mean gas -  
methane, helium, probably water vapor.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

The DRILL PIPE turns sloely, retracting from the hole. Bear, atop the drilling platform, is working on something with a wrench.

Bear accidently drops his wrench. It falls on the turbine's RIPPED MESH PROTECTIVE SCREEN and hangs there. Bear looks at it nervously and reaches...THE WRENCH falls into the turbine spinning at six-thousand r.p.m.

With a GRINDING SQUEAL, the wrench shrapnel blows out of the turbine and --

THE DRILLING ARM reverses speeds and VIOLENTLY THRUSTS THE PIPE FORWARD, buckling it. A piece of the drill string is BLOWN OUT, smashing into Sharp's helmet, spider-webbing his faceshield. He's out cold.

Harry and the guys dive away from the hole. Chick, confused, works the clutch furiously to no avail. THE DRILLING ARM RAMS THE PIPE back down the hole, where it BUCKLES, BENDS AND BREAKS IN HALF.

Tito tends to Sharp..his face has lost all color. Harry approaches the hole. Looks down. FIFTY FEET DOWN IS A MESS OF MANGLED PIPE, blocking the hole.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Golden continues looking at the THERMAL IMAGING.

GOLDEN

Harry, c'mon, we got thirty minutes.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

HARRY

Well, Dan, you're just going to have to goddamn wait 'CAUSE WE GOTTA BIG PROBLEM UP HERE IN HELL.

(turns to guys)

Somebody's gotta go down there.

CHICK

Don't look at me.

BEAR

I can't even get my foot in there.

Harry turns and eyes A.J.

-----

A.J. stares down the hole.

HARRY  
Do or die, kid.

CLOSE ON A.J. as he peers into the hole.

A.J.  
Something I've been meaning to talk  
to you about. When this is all over  
and we're back home, I'd like to  
marry your daughter....

Harry stares at A.J., the look priceless.

A.J. (CONT'D)  
Maybe I'll ask her again later....

Harry turns around..looking up at the star-filled sky. A.J.  
walks over to Sharp...who's coming to now.

HARRY  
(to Golden)  
Oh yeah, Golden?

GOLDEN (V.O.)  
Go ahead, Harry.

HARRY  
Your shuttle pilot just took a nasty  
shot from a drill string....

GOLDEN  
Is he alright?

HARRY  
I hope so, he's gotta get us off  
this shithole.

INT. DRILLING HOLE

A.J, tied to a SAFETY TETHER, comes down the hole with a  
HAND-HELD CUTTER and a LENGTH OF ROPE. He reaches the  
obstruction. The DRILL PIPE has been mashed, bent, buckled.  
Severed ends stab into the sides of the hole. A.J. starts  
cutting with the hand-held cutter.

EXT. DRILLING HOLE

The guys stand there, watching. Nothing happens. Agonising  
seconds pass.

Suddenly the ground rumbles. Another EARTHQUAKE. It slowly  
starts to subside.



INT. DRILLING HOLE

The hole shakes. A.J. freezes, sweating.

HARRY (V.O.)

A.J., we need you. I need everything  
you got.

A.J. wrestles with the severed pipes, untangling them, tying  
the ROPE to them. He gives the rope a tug. Chick and Bear,  
above, pull up the broken pipes.

EXT. DRILLING HOLE

SHARP

Enter interface with the weapon.

Pitts clicks a six digit code into a DIGITAL PAD on the  
DEVICE'S REMOTE DETONATOR.

PITTS

Device armed.

The NUCLEAR DEVICE has a small SLED with RATCHET WHEELS to  
let it slide down the hole slowly. Sharp and Watts lift one  
end of the gurney. THE NUCLEAR DEVICE slides off the gurney  
toward the MOUTH OF THE DRILLING HOLE.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

The thermal and seismic sensors BEING TRANSMITTED FROM FREEDOM  
START GOING CRAZY

SKIP

It's a mess up there...!

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

ANOTHER TEMBLOR hits, the worst yet, 9.7 on Earth. Watts  
falls, losing her grip on the gurney; her end collapses. THE  
NUCLEAR DEVICE lurches sideways off the gurney and rolls  
away from the drilling hole.....

The NUCLEAR DEVICE slides off the gurney....

INT. DRILLING HOLE

A.J. experiences the DEEPEST, MOST SINISTER RUMBLE YET,  
emanating from the asteroid's core, something from hell.  
There's a horrendous WHOOSHING SOUND.

A WINDSTORM OF PEBBLE, like a blowing tornado, whooshes up  
from the hole, smashing into A.J.'S FACESHIELD.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Everyone whirls around in the sound's direction as --

ACROSS THE VALLEY FLOOR - A 100 FOOT METHANE GEYSER erupts, spewing a PLUME OF HIDEOUS GREENISH GAS into space. Then another 200 FEET HIGH! Another 500 FEET HIGH! The ASTEROID has become alive. The geyser's eruptions loosen the asteroid's surface material and --

INT. DRILLING HOLE

A.J.  
THIS SUCKS....

A.J. is whooshed violently out of the hole.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

PEBBLES AND HOT STEAM BLASTS from the drilling hole. Everyone recoils....

HARRY  
Get back!!

A.J. shoots out of the pipe, tethering the SAFETY LINE behind him, blowing into space. The safety tether snaps and RIPS off. A.J. is 70 feet off the surface. Harry dives for his ripped tether. Catching it, inches before A.J.'s thrown into space.

Harry and Bear grab A.J.'s safety tether and begin to pull him down. Chick stares at something O.S., his jaw drops.

CHICK  
This thing definitely doesn't like us.

CHUNKS OF THE ASTEROID, some as big as trucks, others as big as houses, dislodge from the ASTEROID SURFACE and, slowly at first, but with terrifyingly increasing speed and momentum.....

.... they start rolling.

HARRY AND THE GUYS just stand there, disbelieving what they're seeing.

On come the ROCKS and ICE CHUNKS, rolling. As they hit smaller surface rocks, they take little hops, and bigger hops, until they are BOUNDING across the surface. Harry lashes A.J.'s tether to the Armadillo.

Harry and the guys run for their lives.

In the midst of this --

-- A 500 FOOT HIGH GEYSER erupts next to the drilling hole. Pitts gets blasted by the geyser, which blows him across the asteroid floor, SLAMMING him into the parked Armadillo.

A BOULDER rolls at Pitts and squashes him against the ARMADILLO , killing him.

A 20 FOOT ICE BOULDER rolls toward A.J.'s SAFETY TETHER.

A.J., suspended 70 feet off the asteroid surface, looks down at the ONCOMING ICE BOULDER. A.J., terrified, tries to unbuckle the tether, but he can't in time.

The boulder hits A.J.'s tether, rolling over it, flattening it to the asteroid surface, which causes --

--A.J., with a JOLT, to be yanked toward the surface. A.J. scrambles with his safety harness.

Chick, next to the Armadillo, sees A.J.'s plight. He dives inside, engages the gears. The Armadillo ROARS toward the oncoming ICE BOULDER.

A.J., terrified, continues to descend as --

Chick, driving the Armadillo, rams the ICE BOULDER just as it's about to roll over A.J. The boulder hops up, SMASHES down on the Armadillo's hood, CRUSHING the steel compartment around Chick, and gently rolls over onto --

A.J., who log-rolls under the Armadillo, as the ice boulder WHOMPS down and keeps rolling.

THE NUCLEAR DEVICE is rolling across the asteroid's surface. Pebbles and debris CLANGING off the device's REMOTE DETONATOR.....

Harry bounds toward the Armadillo. THE LARGEST, JAGGED ROCK rolls at the vehicle. Harry's caught. There's no place to turn. The rocks rolls straight at him. Twenty feet....10 feet....Harry FALLS heavily to the ground.

Harry gets up and dives down inside a fox-hoe-sized INDENTATION in the asteroid surface....

The BOULDER rolls right over him.

Finally the quake stops. The situation stabilises. Everyone gets to their feet. Harry and A.J. get up. They look off at --

The MASSIVE BOULDERS rolling away in the distance, smashing into other rock formations.

Harry picks up a DIAMOND. It SPARKLES in the light. Chick grabs one. Holds it up, marvelling at it. The MASSIVE BOULDERS rolling away in the distance, smashing into other rock formations.

Harry picks up a DIAMOND. It SPARKLES in the light. Chick grabs one. Holds it up, marvelling at it.

----

Sharp, with bruises on his face, looks through his cracked  
faceshield down at Pitt's corpse.

SHARP  
He's dead.

HARRY  
Put it down, Chick.

Chick tosses down the diamond and follows Harry. Everyone  
checks themselves. Looks at others. There's no talk, no time  
to lose. They reconvene, by the NUCLEAR DEVICE. It's dented.  
The alumnium gurney is smashed, mangled.

SHARP  
Three on that side, the rest over  
here.

They hoist the nuclear device and carry it to the drilling  
hole. They plug one end of the nuke in the drilling hole and  
lift the other. The NUKE begins to insert down the hole.  
Suddenly Sharp tries to grab a TUBULAR PIECE OF ALUMINIUM  
from the broken gurney.

SHARP (CONT'D)  
Stop...!

-- rams it into the wheels of the NUKE'S RATCHET-WHEEL  
DELIVERY SLED. The nuke stops inserting into the hole. Sharp  
inspects the REMOTE DETONATOR.

SHARP (CONT'D)  
The remote's shot.  
(looks up)  
It'll have to be manually dDetonated.

CHICK  
What's that mean?

Pause.

HARRY  
Means one of us ain't leaving.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Golden addresses the room.

GOLDEN  
The situation: the hole is drilled  
but the remote detonator is not  
functional. One of the crew is going  
to stay behind and....  
(deep breath)  
...manually detonate the device.

Golden looks over at Grace. She is stunned. The news is just sinking in.

GOLDEN  
Don't stay for this.

GRACE  
I'm not leaving.

TEMPLE  
In 18 minutes we will be at Zero  
Barrier.  
(to Grace)  
Your father better be a man of his  
word.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - CABIN

PAN FROM HARRY...to A.J. to...to Chick....to Lev...to Bear.  
Everyone is huddled inside the cabin.

The SMASHED REMOTE DETONATOR, a 2000-foot spool-drum of  
ELECTRICAL WIRE and a KNIFE sit on the table.

SHARP  
(stoically)  
I'd trade places with any one of  
you. But we need two people to fly  
this mother back. So, we either all  
stay or you guys draw.

Sharp raises a BUNDLE OF ELECTRICAL WIRES in his hand. The  
crew's going to draw straws. The highest tension yet. No one  
breathes, no one moves.

SHARP  
Who's first?  
(no response)  
Clockwise then.

Sharp holds the WIRE STRAND BUNDLE in front of Lev.

Lev stares at it. He smiles nervously and reaches...and draws.  
The strand is LONG. Lev exhales. Next...

Chick, Chick stares at the bundle, sweating. He grabs a  
strand. Pulls slowly. LONG. He exhales. Next...

Bear. He stares at the bundle, thinking, choosing. He grabs  
and pulls quickly, decisively. LONG. Two strands remain, and  
two men, Harry and A.J. It's A.J.'s turn....

A.J. stares at the wire strands - not a bundle now. A.J.  
shifts in his chair. The matter will be decided on this last  
pull. A.J. looks at Harry.

They lock eyes.

HARRY

Your turn.

A.J.

I ain't gonna draw against you Harry.

CHICK

(starts to get up)

I can't watch this.

HARRY

(stern, hard)

Sit down, Chick.

Chick sits down. Harry looks at A.J.

HARRY

Draw.

A.J. stares at the two strands. Gets used to the idea. He reaches and begins to pull. Stops. Chooses the other strand. And pulls. It is SHORT.

A.J. stares at the SHORT STRAND OF WIRE in his hand. We see a fear on his face that gets covered by a small smile.

A.J.

Well, I guess I won. Now I'm the guy who gets to save the Earth.

A.J. takes off the half medallion. Harry takes off his half medallion.

A.J.

We said we'd join these after we drilled the hole. It just ain't gonna be on Earth.

They slide the two halves together to make a whole. Harry and A.J. exchange a long look.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

Watts flips switches. Suddenly the jets ignite!

WATTS

Ignition! She's started!

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Skip turns to Golden excitedly.

SKIP

They got Freedom goin'!

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - CARGO BAY

A.J. and Harry stand in the airlock, helmets on. Harry carries the two thousand foot spool-drum of wire. The airlock opens. Harry and A.J. descend onto the asteroid.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Golden looks at the CLOCK running down:  
10:33....10:32....10:31...

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Harry and A.J. approach the NUCLEAR DEVICE. It's half in, half out of the drilling hole, as they left it. Harry and A.J. alligator-clamp the end of the wire spool-drum onto the nuke's DETONATION DEVICE.

A.J.

You never answered my question.

They finish attaching the wire.

A.J. pulls the piece of TUBULAR ALUMINIUM out of the nuke's ratchet wheel delivery sled. The NUKE descends downhole, slowly spooling out wire from the SPOOL DRUM.

A.J.

About Grace, Harry.

(laughs nervously)

I know it ain't gonna happen now,  
but....if things were different...What  
would you say...?

Harry walks back toward Freedom. A.J. follows.

HARRY

I always wanted a son. And if I  
had....I'd want him to be like you.

Harry hands him the pipe section.

HARRY (CONT'D)

You're going to need some magic in  
the world. You can marry her, A.J.

A.J. laughs, being told at this dire time in his life. He looks at Harry with a hint of bittersweet smile.

A.J.

Mean "could have...?"

HARRY

No. Go home A.J., Marry Grace.

A.J.

I'm not going home Harry.

With one hand, Harry stabs the airlock door, and then with a small pipe clamp, rips A.J.'s air tubes off.

HARRY

It's my hole, I drilled it, and I'm staying with it till the end.

Harry grabs him, throws his kicking, screaming body into the airlock. A.J. is choking.

HARRY (CONT'D)

She's always going to be my little girl.

The door shuts automatically. Harry is now alone.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - AIRLOCK

A.J. explodes from the airlock into the cabin.

A.J.

Goddamn it, HARRY....!

A.J. lunges for the airlock.

Sharp grabs A.J. with his good arm, helped by Bear..holding him back.

A.J.

LET ME GO....LET ME GO....!!

SHARP

YOU HAVE NO OXYGEN...YOUR TUBES ARE RIPPED...LET IT GO....!!

A.J., sobbing, furious, POUNDS on the AIRLOCK WINDOW, staring at Harry outside.

A.J.

(pounding on the door)

HARRY!!

Harry turns and walks back to the drilling hole. Sharp looks at him.

SHARP

This guy really is a hero....

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL REAR ROOM

SKIP

Director? It's Mr. Stamper. He wants to talk to his daughter.

Golden looks over at Grace. Their eyes meet....



A N.A.S.A. Tech hands Grace a mike and exits. She stares at the static on the monitor. Harry's face fades in and out.

Grace knows something is very wrong from her father's strained, tired face. She forces a smile.

INTERCUT with Harry inside the Armadillo:

GRACE

Daddy.

HARRY (V.O.)

Grace. I...

(sighs)

This is so hard for me. I don't have....

Tears start to well up in her eyes.

HARRY (V.O.)

(cont'd)

...I just....want you to know how much I love you.

GRACE

I'm so proud of you, Daddy.

Grace wipes a tear from her face.

HARRY (V.O.)

(looking at Earth)

It's so beautiful up here. So pure.

(swallows hard)

I remember something I read once..."The world is a fine place...and worth fighting for."

(looks at Earth, smiles)

Gracie, I'm just an iron-ass-warrior doin' what's best.

(pause)

Take care of A.J. I'll look in on you from time to time....

Harry pulls off the video link. Grace's monitors go black. Grace touches the monitor, as Harry's face fades away.

Her knees buckle. She sinks to the floor.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Harry looks at the detonator in hand.

HARRY

You have three minutes and I'm not waiting.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

Watts and Sharp settle into the cockpit and begin flipping switches.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Harry, all business now, situates himself next to the nuke. The manual detonator in his hand.

HARRY

Let's go, Sharp. Get the hell off this rock. I WILL push this button.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

Sharp hits the THRUSTER SWITCH.

EXT. FREEDOM

The booster rockets SPUTTER and die.

INT. FREEDOM - COCKPIT

Nothing happens. He HITS it again. Again.

Watts unbuckles and goes to the ENGINE IGNITION SYSTEM.

The timer continues counting down to 1:34...1:33...1:32....

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

SKIP

The thrusters are down! 32 seconds.

EXT. ASRTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Harry looks irritably at the SHUTTLE'S SPATTERING THRUSTER.

HARRY

Sharp, you better get those engines goin'.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - SERVICE HATCH

The timer counts 23...22...21.

Watts is frantically adjusting the FUEL MODULATOR'S VALVES...

SHARP

Watts, we gotta get that thing going!

WATTS

THE INTERIORR VALVE'S STUCK!

Lev crowds in next to her.

-----  
WATTS (CONT'D)

(to Lev)

BACK OFF!! YOU DON'T KNOW THIS  
COMPONENT!!

Lev backs off. Keeps looking at the modulator, curiously.

IN THE COCKPIT - the Timer reads 10...9...9...SHARP keeps  
hitting the THRUSTER SWITCH.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Golden paces. Technicians stare pessimistically at consoles.

GOLDEN

Stamper, you gave me your word. You  
have five seconds. PRESS THE BUTTON!

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

TEMPLE (V.O.)

Sharp, I NEED A SOLUTION!

BACK TO LEV , Watts and Sharp.

SHARP

Sir with all due respect, if I knew  
the PROBLEM, I'd give a SOLUTION,  
SIR..!

TEMPLE

Well, find a solution!!

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Harry is looking at the shuttle. Close-Up on finger ready to  
pull the trigger.

HARRY

SHARP, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?  
GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!

Harry's eyes close as the clock counts -10...-11...-12.

TEMPLE

STAMPER DETONATE!

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - SERVICE HATCH

LEV

(to Watts)

WE HAVE JUST THE SAME SHIT PART IN  
RUSSIA!! SOMETIMES IT NOT WORK SO WE  
HIT!! YOU GOTTA GIVE IT WHACK!!  
WHACK!! HIT!!

WATTS

WHAT!!?

LEV

GIVE IT WHACK!!

Lev grab a wrench and goes ballistic. SMASHES it down on the component, AGAIN and AGAIN and AGAIN. We hear JET FUEL COURSE through the component and --

-- SHARP hits the IGNITION SWITCH and the THRUSTERS FIRE.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - SHUTTLE FREEDOM

Shuttle Freedom lifts off the asteroid on full REVERSE THRUSTER POWER, like a Harrier jet. It ascends backwards, falling away from the asteroid, away from Earth, toward the Moon.

Harry is a solitary figure, left behind.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

Sharp, Watts, A.J., Lev and Bear watch Harry becoming smaller and smaller on the asteroid.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Harry takes his final breaths. Looks around.

HARRY

All right, son-of-a-bitch, it's just you and me....

Harry's FINGER compresses on the detonator button....

A GEYSER OF STEAM next to the drilling hole BLAT up to five feet away. A SECOND GEYSER, directly underneath Harry, BLOWS. The MANUAL DETONATOR flies from Harry's hand as he's knocked backward --

-- into the drilling hole!

INT. DRILLING HOLE

Harry falls ass-first down the hole, his PRO-GRAVITY THRUSTERS pushing him further and further down. Harry's FINGERS GOUGE into the walls of the hole.

He scissors his legs. HIS BOOTS scrape the sides. He begins climbing up out of the hole....We see that his air has been punctured. He's losing pressure. He starts to choke.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

They've ascended to a safe distance.

SHARP  
Something's wrong.

A.J.  
Don't worry. He'll come through.

SHARP  
We should have detonation by now.

A.J.  
Harry doesn't fail.

SHARP  
We're going back.

A.J.  
What?

SHARP  
Every life, that you know, will  
die...unless that nuke is detonated.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

HARRY'S GLOVED HANDS grip the sides of the hole. Then his helmet appears.

He looks across the asteroid surface to the MANUAL DETONATOR, lying in the dirt.

The nuke has now descended several hundred feet into the hole.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

WE MOVE DOWN the faces of the terrified men, looking down on the craggy asteroid....

CHICK  
(unsure)  
That means we might die too....

SHARP  
Watts, prepare for re-landing. NOW!!

Watts, frozen with fear, begins hitting switches.

EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE - DRILLING SITE

Harry crawls out of the hole.

The nuke is at the bottom of the hole. Harry runs, gasping for air, bounding across the asteroid surface, dodging geysers and rolling debris.

He dives for the detonator. He stares long and hard. A TEAR wells in his eye. His finger presses on the detonator...sweat pours over his face....

HARRY

I beat you.

SLOW-MOTION CLOSE-UP on Harry's finger as it presses the detonator.

EXT. SPACE

The nuclear device DETONATES. A spectacular concussion. The ASTEROID SPLITS in two halves, as planned, like a split diamond. The TWO BLOWN PIECES wing off into space, on new vector angles which might miss the Earth....

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM - COCKPIT

The detonation ROCKS the cabin. Everyone's violently buffeted around.

WATTS

Houston, we have detonation!

Watts fumbles for the reverse switches as the flames from the explosion grow CLOSER....She hits the directional THRUSTERS, jamming it as hard as it will go...the flames bite up at them. The shuttle veers off toward Earth.

A.J.

Harry....

A.J. and the others stare out the cockpit window as the NUCLEAR FISSION EXPLOSION FLAMES OUT, the halves of the asteroid wing off.

EXT. AROUND THE WORLD - MONTAGE OF IMAGES

IN EXTREME SLOW MO, we see images around the world. WALL STREET deserted....a crowded BAR with people huddled around a T.V....Extremely tight on a TEAR falling from a woman's face....ENGLISH FARMERS in a corn field....a FATHER holding his SON as they watch the brilliant flaming sky....Golden closes his eyes and falls to his seat....Arms raise in unison....PEOPLE embrace....AT THE PYRAMIDS, dappled in firelight, hundreds praying....

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

Grace is quietly weeping.

THE ASTEROID'S DETONATION is computer-imaged on the Central Board. WE SEE the ASTEROID'S TWO HALVES, moving in new directions. The Technicians stare in wonderment.

GOLDEN

Where are they, Flip? Give me some angles, give me some directions, give me speeds...

FLIP

(analysing new data)  
The new courses are....they're gonna miss us!

The Technicians CHEER. Grace looks up. Wipes her tears. Golden approaches her.

GOLDEN

I just want to tell you I'm proud to know the daughter of the man who just saved the world.

EXT. ARIZONA - SHUTTLE LANDING AREA

Shuttle Freedom touches down. N.A.S.A. QUARANTINE VEHICLES race out to meet it.

INT. N.A.S.A. - MISSION CONTROL

N.A.S.A.TEHNICIANS sit at consoles, exhausted. There are Coke cans, coffee mugs, cigarettes overflowing ashtrays. Jimbo, Theo and Pearl, wearing V.I.P. VISITORS BUTTONS, stand at the back.

JIMBO

This definitely doesn't look like a glamorous job.

INT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

A.J., Chick and Bear unbuckle, begin to rise from seats.

CHICK

I'm dyin' for a Budweiser.

SHARP

Stay seated. Let the medical quarantine trucks set up.

BEAR

I ain't gettin' another enema from Nurse Ratchet.

A.J., Chick and Bear look at each other.

A.J.

What would Harry do?

BEAR

I think he'd go get a beer.

EXT. SHUTTLE FREEDOM

The EMERGENCY HATCH DOOR BLOWS in front of surprised N.A.S.A. QUARANTINE TECHNICIANS.

EXT. ARIZONA - SHUTTLE LANDING AREA

A.J., Chick and Bear walk away from the shuttle. All the N.A.S.A. QUARANTINE MEDICS are looking for them.

CHICK

What are you lookin' at?

BEAR

Yeah, okay, you're right, we're the studs who just blew up the Death Star.

A wave of fans are held back by MILITARY POLICE.

Sharp, holding his shoulder in pain, is helped across the tarmac by Watts. A VET BYSTANDER comes up to Sharp and drapes an American flag over his shoulders.

Temple, with a huge grin, approaches Sharp. Temple salutes Sharp.

Among the masses, Chick catches sight of Denise. Tommy stands next to her, waving a small flag, proud as can be.

Grace runs toward A.J.; he sees her and runs to her.

They fall into each others arms. Grace is crying. A.J. is crying. They kiss. A.J. looks up at the sky.

A.J.

He's up there, Grace. And he'll never die. Will you marry me? I gotcha a new rock....

A.J. pulls out one of the DIAMONDS from the asteroid surface, as big as a doorknob, about two thousand karats. It glitters in the sunlight. Grace stares at it, agog.

As we PULL BACK and CAMERA TILTS TO THE SKIES ABOVE.

Where Harry Stamper's soul remains.....

THE END